The Year of Grace

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KNOWING THE TIME

And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.—*Rom.* 13 : 11.

He is a wise man who is able to tell time. What does the clock say when it strikes? What do the hands mean when they point this way and that? When will it be noon? When will it be night? These are questions not only in chronology but in ethics. It is the business not only of the jeweler but of the moralist to see that they be answered right.

Hezekiah looked at the sun-dial to learn the will of God; we may find it in the face of the clock. "To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven: a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted; a time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance; a time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing; a time to get, and a

time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away; a time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak; a time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace." This is the end of the catalogue of the hours, not because it has included all things seasonable, but because the writer's hand is weary. To hear the clock when it strikes, to keep our own watch in accord with the chronometer of God, to know when the night-time comes, to act or to wait, to go or to stay, to speak or to listen,—this is at the heart of all wise conduct.

It is true that St. Paul seems to disregard the clock. He would preach the truth, he said, in season and out of season, without reference to the time of day. But a greater than St. Paul said: "My hour is not yet come." And what St. Paul meant was only that he purposed to warn men, whether they would hear or whether they would decline to hear. When the house is found to be on fire, no attention is to be paid to states of mind or office hours.

To know the time is to recognize the opportunity. He who knows when to buy and when to sell, will be rich. One of the reasons for the differences among men, whereby one succeeds while another fails, is in the presence

or absence of that wisdom, or prudence, or untiring attention by which the time is known. The man who wins may be a better scholar than his neighbor, or a worse; he may belong to a family of influence, or to a family of no influence; he may start with a lot of money, or he may earn his first coin by blacking boots. These things are of slight importance. They do not determine destiny. The thing that counts, the quality which the man of attainment possesses and the man of failure lacks, always, is that which is shown in knowledge or ignorance of the time. The most important science which any young man can learn in college or out of college, is not geology, nor climatology, nor biology, nor even theology, but chronology,—the science of the time. Learn to tell time. Study to recognize the moment when it comes.

Here are a hundred men toiling hard with every muscle in the roar and glare of a steel mill, and above them on a platform is a man who does nothing but to sit quietly in a comfortable chair and watch the flame which is blown through the ore in the great crucible: the man in the chair is paid as much as any ten of the begrimed men who are pulling and hauling below. That is what he gets for knowing the time. He knows the

precise instant when that huge boiling pot has boiled enough, when its contents are ready to be poured out into moulds and rolled into steel rails. It is a symbol of the value of recognition. It has in it the secret of all progress, material, intellectual and spiritual.

This is what our Lord means in those Advent parables whose moral is in the word "Watch." Watch what? The face of the clock, the approach of the hour, the passage of opportunity. "For ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the son of man cometh."

There was once a great city which for lack of knowledge of the time fell into utter destruction. Christ Himself visited that city, did His works of marvel there, spoke His words of revelation and of benediction there: the city was given every spiritual chance. It seemed for a moment as if the citizens would recognize the opportunity and know the time. As Jesus went along the street, crowds went with Him, before and after; heads were thrust out of all windows; everybody was asking: "Who is this?" "This is Jesus, the prophet of Nazareth, in Galilee," was the answer. But somehow, after that, the city seemed to have no further interest. Presently, when Jesus was again conducted through the streets, not now in triumphal procession but as a prisoner, with

hands tied and hostile faces turned against Him, the city which had asked that question, and received that answer, paid no heed; except that many of the citizens cried, "Crucify Him!" That is why Jesus wept over that city: not for His own sake, but for the city's sake. The supreme opportunity had come and had been rejected. Jerusalem knew not the time of her visitation. By and by she paid the penalty which in some degree every city and every individual must inevitably pay for lack of knowledge of the time.

Thus it is that the Palm Sunday gospel is read to-day at the beginning of Advent. It teaches an Advent lesson.

This is the season of the year at which, for these many centuries, the thoughts of Christian people have been especially directed to the coming of the Lord. The gathering of the harvest suggests that other harvest at the end of the world, whose reapers will be the angels. The death of the plants puts sober thoughts into our hearts. The anniversary of Christ's coming in the old time, taking our nature upon Him, for our salvation, suggests the anticipation of His coming again in the unknown new time, in power and great glory, for the judgment of the world.

But all the circumstances of that second

coming are involved in the deep shadow of mystery. Nothing is seen with clearness. When it will be, where it will be, how it will be,—we may ask as long as we will; there is no answer. Even in the words of our Lord and of the apostles, the line between prophecy and symbol is so faintly drawn that no man knows the real meaning. Part of what is said seems to refer to the siege of Jerusalem in the year 70; part to the final catastrophe when the planet upon which we live shall go the way of stars and suns, and be no longer a place of human habitation; part to the continually repeated Advent when Christ comes to every nation as He came to the Jews, in the crises of the national life, and to every city as He came to Jerusalem, in the alternatives of municipal progress, and to every individual as He came to John and Peter, as He came to Herod and to Pilate, in the opportunities of individual human experience. Concerning the remoter meanings of the Advent, we know nothing. In that sense, we cannot know the time. Indeed, it is said plainly enough, "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in His own power." The "last day" is out of our sight; the present day is the only day we have. The last judg-

ment will be but the confirmation of a present judgment, which is being enacted now, while I speak and you listen. The best time for us to think about, the most necessary time for us to know about, is this actual day in which we are alive. The coming of Christ for which we ought immediately to make ourselves ready is His coming this very morning, and this afternoon. To-day He comes; to-day we accept Him or reject Him. There is no procession; there is no noise of shouting; there is neither sight nor sound. Yet He comes.

A good while ago some people in Thessalonica were so much occupied in studying the future, in imagining to themselves the end of the world, and the Advent of Christ at the day of judgment, and in calculating the time when the drama of humanity would ascend to its supreme and final climax, that they were neglecting their daily business. In the awful expectation of that impending and tremendous crisis they stopped work. St. Paul wrote to forbid that. He believed like the rest of them that the Saviour would come soon; but he declared that in the meantime the only right occupation for anybody who was awaiting Him was to attend to his daily business and be found doing it with Christian diligence. Though the sky grow portentously

black at midday, and a fear fall upon men that the sun is forever darkened and the great day of the Lord is at hand, let lights be brought, and let us continue to perform the common duty of the hour.

The people of Jerusalem in the day of Christ's visitation there knew not the time because they were so busy looking ahead to some future time. They were, indeed, anticipating the coming of the Lord, but they had somehow made it up out of the old prophecies that He would come in some terrible and splendid manner, to strike the hearts of all beholders with fear and awe. And when He came in a quiet, human way, as a man among his fellow men, out of a carpenter shop, having brothers and sisters with whom everybody in town was acquainted, dressed in such garments as His neighbors wore and not in any shining vesture, and speaking simple words whose splendor was not in any pomp of utterance but in the truth which they expressed, these expectant Jerusalemites did not recognize Him. Their eyes were so wide open for some spectacular visitation from the glowing sky, that when they looked that day out of their windows and saw a peasant of Galilee, in the company of other peasants, passing along the city streets, and were told that this

was Jesus, the prophet of Nazareth, they looked no longer.

We can hardly understand to-day how that name "Nazareth" affected the men who were actually looking for the Messiah. To us it is a sacred name; every syllable of it is fragrant with precious memories. That the Messiah should come from Nazareth seems to us to be natural enough. We know that it was a simple, country town, but the fact serves only to attract us. The sky bends tenderly over it, the great hills stand guard about it; we see in fancy the angel of the annunciation descending out of heaven into its quiet streets. But to the men of that time it was as secular a place as Jersey City. To the dreamers who were expecting an advent from the shining clouds, a Messiah from Jerusalem would have been hard to believe in, unless He came at least from the height of a pinnacle of the temple: a Messiah from a Nazareth carpenter shop was impossible, hopelessly impossible.

That is, they had much the same idea of the coming of Christ as we have. They idealized it away from common life, as we do. They read the Old Testament as we read the New, and interpreted the high visions of the prophets as we interpret the splendid symbols of

the apocalypse. When they read that Messiah would come as a King, they saw a crown and a sceptre and a gilded robe, and thrones of state. We read that Christ will come in the clouds with all His holy angels with Him, and we look up into the sky.

No, the truth is that the advent of which we read in the gospels is the symbol of all the other advents. Thus it is that Jesus comes where two or three are met together, or where one alone is fighting a great battle with the devil in his own soul, or where a multitude of men in an hour of public crisis are awaiting the event. In His great humility, in His divine simplicity, in His wonderful harmony with that background of our life which we call commonplace, because we see without perceiving, in the transactions of our common day, He comes.

Christ is always coming. The "time" is now. They failed to recognize Him in Thessalonica because they were looking over the head of the present into the future. They did not see that He stood beside them in their daily tasks. They failed to recognize Him in Jerusalem because they were looking into the sky instead of looking into the street. The time came and they did not know it.

Jesus spoke of the fall of Jerusalem, as

one of His comings. There were some, He said, among His disciples, who should not taste of death till they should see Him come with power. That is our sanction for saying that He has come in every other crisis that has changed the course of nations. It was in reliance upon His own words that they expected Him soon. And He came soon. They had understood Him to speak of material reality when He intended spiritual reality. It was the constant and natural error of the disciples, for which He again and again reproved them. "The flesh profiteth nothing," He said. The outward clothing of the truth is not the truth itself. "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit," they have spiritual meanings.

Christ comes in every crisis that enters into the common lives of common men. A great many biographies that will never be written have a fall of Jerusalem in them somewhere that nobody ever heard of except the man or the woman, and a few of their nearest friends. We make a great mistake when we set Christ a long way off, and look for Him in the remote future, and think that the "time" of which this religious season reminds us is at the end of the world, and that the Advent will be only in that marvelous blaze of glory told of in the

inspired poetry of the old prophecies, with the sun turned into darkness and the moon into blood, with the hills reeling and the sea and the waves roaring, and men's hearts failing them for fear. It is of far more import to us that the "time" is the living present, that Christ comes every day to each of us, that the judgment is forever going on, and that the life eternal begins down here, and now.

"Knowing the time," writes the apostle, "that now it is high time to awake out of sleep. Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light." Christ Himself says that to us when He comes. That is the message of the unending Advent. Put the old away, and begin anew. Set the unworthy life resolutely behind you and begin again. You can do it, if you will. That mean temptation to which you have yielded every day this past week, resolving between times never to do it again, and then doing it: you can get the better of it. God helping you, it shall be thrust beneath your feet. To-day begins another chapter: recognize the time: lay hold upon the hand of Him who at this hour is passing by, as of old in the villages of Galilee.

Christ came in that long, bitter sickness that you had, out of which you were hardly ex-

pected to recover. Christ came in that fearful peril in which you stood once, and out of which you were so wonderfully rescued and restored. Christ came in that great loss that you suffered in your business, or in that loss that you feared, but that never actually happened. Christ came in that grievous sin which you are unable to forget, and in that profound sorrow which for a time changed the whole course of your life.

Christ comes in every moment of temptation. Temptation is an opportunity to show our love for God. We have to make a quick decision for or against God. Every encounter with temptation is a little day of judgment: out we go to the right hand or to the left. Then we ought to know the time, to realize the meaning of the moment, to appreciate the eternal significance of that instant of decision. Now is the time. Now is the time to take the hand of Jesus Christ and turn the back upon the devil. Now is the time to say "No!" and "No!" and again "No!" God gives help from heaven to every tempted man every time he says that word, that potent word: a good deal of help the first time, and twice as much the second time, and so on; the harder it is to say it, the greater the strength that comes with the saying.

Christ comes in every time of spiritual invitation. Whoever is conscious of a desire to live better than he has been living, to him Christ comes as truly as He ever came to men who were mending their nets beside the Galilean lake. We make a mistake when we wait for any other call than that: the mistake which they made who expected a dramatic advent, heralded by angelic trumpets. Christ's call comes quietly.

Christ comes along the way of our common lives. The voice divine addresses us in pages of a book, in the conversation of a friend, in the appeal of a sermon. And the call is simply to a better conforming of our will to the will of Jesus Christ; to take His life as the ideal life, and day by day to try to live it under our own conditions, in our own streets, offices, class-rooms, houses.

The essential thing in all these visitations, in every crisis, every temptation, every call of Christ, is to know the time, and make the most of it. Time passes, and opportunity goes with it. Jesus weeps over the city which knew not the time, for at last it is too late. *Now* is the accepted time, the only time there is. Now stands Christ amongst us, calling us into discipleship, into allegiance, into

obedience to Him. "To-day, if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts." To-morrow,—who knows that he will have any to-morrow?

THE INSPIRED BOOK

Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.—2 *Pet.* 1 : 21.

WHAT is meant by inspiration? What is God's part and what is man's in the writing of an inspired book? How much belongs to the holy men and how much to the Holy Ghost? Wherein does the inspiration of the Bible differ from any other action of God upon the human soul and mind?

To these questions the Christian Church gives no authoritative answer. The doctrine of the inspiration of Holy Scripture is a doctrine without a definition. There are definitions, indeed, in plenty, and large books written in defense of them, but they are individual definitions, the theories or pronouncements of unofficial persons. Some of these persons claim, indeed, to speak the mind of the Church; and their claim is just, if by the mind of the Church we mean the conviction of a majority of church people for a great many years. But the settled mind of the Church, in the true sense of that phrase, is the deliberate assertion which is reached after long considera-

tion, and is expressed in accepted formulas. The creeds speak the mind of the Church; so, in a lesser degree, do the historic offices of worship. Nowhere in these documents is there any theory of inspiration. The Decrees of the Council of Trent, the Articles of the Church of England, and the Westminster Confession of Faith have somewhat to say about the Bible; they are all agreed in setting it in the forefront of religion; they exalt it in strong words; but they do not decide or even debate the question of its inspiration.

It is true that at ordination, before the service begins, as the last word in the examination of the candidate, he is required to subscribe to this declaration: "I do believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God." But the statement thus made is capable of very different interpretations. It may mean that every sentence of the sacred book came by divine revelation; or it may mean no more than that the Bible is God's message to man. It is God's word: that is all that is said about it. There is no assertion as to the way in which the word came, or as to the accuracy with which they to whom it originally came delivered it. There is no settled doctrine of inspiration.

There is indeed a very generally accepted

opinion as to the nature of the Bible. And the positive terms in which it is expressed, the piety of those who hold it, the strong endeavor,—sometimes successful,—to maintain that those who do not hold it are enemies of the faith, might seem to give it the standing of an authoritative statement. But it does not differ in these respects from other opinions which in the past have gained a like favor, and kept it for a number of centuries, only to be eventually abandoned. Thus, in and after the time of Origen, the Bible was believed to be an allegory. The statement of St. Paul that Abraham's maid-servant Hagar was Mt. Sinai in Arabia was taken as an example of the right way to read the Bible. Henceforth, for several hundred years, nothing in the Scriptures meant what it said. The homeliest statistics of the Old Testament chroniclers had mystical meanings. The three hundred and eighteen servants of Abraham were a type of the three hundred and eighteen holy fathers who sat in council at Nicæa. "Blessed be he that taketh thy children and dasheth them against the stones," was a hard text; but understand that the children intended are evil thoughts whose father is the devil, and the sentence is both clear and Christian. Thus all the stumbling-blocks of exegesis were turned into stepping

stones and made a flight of shining stairs straight to the top of Zion hill. The idea of plenary inspiration did not more solidly dominate the thought of the Church of the nineteenth century, than did the idea of allegorical interpretation prevail in the Church of the early middle ages.

Thus men have thought about the Bible now in this way and now in that, and are still continuing to think about it. This great, wonderful, many-sided library of religious truth is still too big for any of our definitions. And there is no definition in which the nature of the Bible is finally and satisfactorily stated. There is room here for all the adventurous explorations of scholars. And the scholars are vigorously at work exploring, sometimes losing their way, sometimes losing their heads, but nevertheless adding to our fund of useful knowledge.

There have always been theories of inspiration, wise and unwise. They have differed, for the most part, in their emphasis; some of them putting the chief stress on the human side of Holy Scripture, others on the divine side.

Thus, in the seventeenth century, it was denied by some Christians that the Bible has any human side whatever. It was maintained that the writers of the Bible were no

more responsible for the books which bear their name than a stenographer is responsible for a sermon. God was accountable, and none other. Moses and Jeremiah, Paul and Peter, simply wrote, syllable by syllable and word by word, as the Holy Spirit dictated; they held the pen, but God wrote.

Thus, the Bible was taken to be the "Word of God" in the most literal sense which that phrase can bear. If anybody ventured to point out an error in the Bible, he was guilty of blasphemy. It was impossible that God should err; the shameless critic was finding fault with God. True, there were apparent contradictions in the sacred writings, where one book said one thing and another book said another, but these contradictions were held to be only apparent, and devout scholars furnished laborious and ingenious explanations to account for them. True, there were more serious divergences in moral standards, notably between the earlier books of the Bible and the later, and especially between the Old Testament and the New. There were also differences of style and theme, and the space between the genealogical tables of the First Book of Chronicles and the prayers and counsels of the last chapters of the Gospel according to St. John was like the contrast between

an alkali plain and the green peak of a mountain. Nevertheless, the whole series of canonical writings, from beginning to end, was charged in every word with Divine authority. Even the speeches of Satan in the Book of Job had an air of sanctity about them.

The fact that the Bible, as it was read by most people, was all in the English of the early part of the seventeenth century, made the idea of a single author easy. It was all in one style; even the poetry was in prose; and it was all bound into a single volume with gilded edges. It looked like one book; it read like one book; and to almost all of its readers it was in fact one book. It was God's book. The Holy writings, from the Garden of Eden to the Day of Judgment, in every phrase and statement, in every turn of grammar and every mark of punctuation, came down out of the blue sky.

On the other hand, the tendency to-day is to go just as far in the other direction. It is denied by some enthusiastic critics that the Bible has any divine side at all. It is classed by them with other books, and is studied by them like other books, and is discovered, so they say, to be in all respects like other books. The Bible is a human document entirely. The writers of it exhibit individual characteristics,

marks of temperament and peculiarities of style, as different from one another as Tennyson is different from Longfellow, and Carlyle from Parkman. And these differences in these ancient authors, as in the modern, are in the men.

The Bible writers are not even free from the limitations and prejudices, nor safe from the errors and ignorances, of their time. Some of them wrote good Hebrew and Greek, others not so good. Some of them knew what they were writing about, and set it down from their own experience; others gathered their information as best they could, and made all the mistakes in the process which are made to-day by the best-intentioned historians. Some of them wrote the books to which their names are attached in the pages of our English Bible; others did not write a word of the documents which are attributed to them, and never so much as saw or heard of them; in some cases the book and the commonly supposed author are several centuries apart. And, in any case, the Bible writers were men of like passions with ourselves. David wrote hymns, and so did Isaac Watts. Saint Luke wrote history, and so did Lord Macaulay. Amos and Spurgeon were both great preachers.

These two very different theories of Holy Scripture are held by two kinds of critics; the word "critic" being here used in its technical not in its conversational sense, to mean not one who complains but one who examines, not a finder of faults but a lover of study. A critic, in this sense, is a student. There are two directions which students of the Bible may take. They may devote themselves to the words of the Bible, or to the books of the Bible. That is, they may study the Scriptures with a microscope, comparing manuscripts, handling the grammar and the dictionary, and settling the exact text. Or, they may study the Scriptures in their human relationships, busying themselves with questions of date and authorship, with the geography and the history and trying to make out the intention of the books, especially as their writers may have been affected by the time and place and circumstances under which they wrote. The students who apply themselves to the words of the Bible are called lower critics; the students who apply themselves to the books of the Bible are called higher critics.

It is a curious psychological fact that a great many of the lower critics hold the old theory of inspiration; while a great many of the higher critics hold the new theory. It

indicates a difference which is not only theological but temperamental. The man who is more interested in adjectives and conjunctions and Greek endings than he is in anything else is by temperament a conservative person. He has a constitutional objection to novelty. The man whose prevailing interests are in books and people is likely to have a sensitive imagination and an open mind and to be attracted by new ideas.

That the higher criticism does not of necessity lead to destructive or even to novel views of the Bible is shown by the fact that we are all higher critics. Very few have either the genius or the patience which makes the lower criticism possible. Almost all of those who are engaged in expounding or even in studying the Bible are higher critics. All the Sunday-school teachers, and nearly all the ministers are higher critics. That is, we are all interested not in the single words but in the chapters and the books of the Bible; we are all trying to find out what the Bible means by such light as we can bring to it from history, from geography and from human nature. We must therefore make a further distinction which shall divide the higher critics into different classes. This distinction is naturally made according to the basis on which these

students proceed in their Biblical studies. Some of them proceed upon the basis of tradition; others upon the basis of induction. That is, some instinctively ask, What have wise and holy people said about the Bible? While others instinctively ask, What does the Bible say about itself?

The first of the two questions is old, and the answer is invariably conservative. Its reference is to the past, and they who ask it desire to follow in the footsteps of the fathers. The second question is new; only of late has it been very generally introduced into the discussion. It sets tradition quite aside, dismisses authority, and purposes without prejudice to examine only the actual facts. The answer to this question is by no means invariably conservative. The very novelty of it tempts the askers into a reaction from received theories. Some of the work which begins with this question is constructive, some of it is destructive. When it was first asked, most of the answers were destructive, so that conservative folk shuddered to hear them. Thus it was that the higher criticism got the bad name which it is now beginning to outgrow. To-day, more of the answers are constructive, and the results tend to the maintenance of the faith.

Anyhow, whatever be the answer, it is the second question which we are at present bound to ask. To inquire what the good men of old time said about the Bible may bring satisfaction to our own souls, but it will never convince our neighbors. The answer to that question is no longer an effective argument. Men to-day are as indifferent to the theories of the rabbis of ancient Alexandria about the Bible, as they are to the theories of Greek doctors of the same era about the body. The modern man has great confidence in the modern scholar. The citation of the ancient assertions even of the saints does not impress him.

We go, then, to the Bible itself to learn about inspiration. We examine there the effects of inspiration. God may have done this, or He may have done that: what did He actually do? The Bible may have been written in one way or in another: what conclusions are to be drawn from the actual book?

Coming thus to the Bible itself, we perceive at once that it is made up of various literary forms. The Old Testament begins with several chapters of that kind of writing which, when it is found on Chaldean bricks, is called myth and legend. This is followed by volumes of history, in the midst of which is a book of

ritual. Near the end of this historical record are two series of narratives which cover the same ground and tell the same story, but from different points of view. For example, one narrator, who is interested in the life of the whole people, tells us a great deal about Elijah and Elisha, prophets of the northern kingdom after the great schism. The other, who is interested only in the church, entirely omits Elijah and Elisha, as being dissenting ministers.

Then follow volumes of poetry. First, the Book of Job, a noble drama, in which by aid of dialogue and action one of the deepest problems of humanity is studied—the problem of pain. Then the Psalms, a collection of hymns and songs, some for use in service, some for use in camp, some for quiet reading; one a description of a thunder-storm, another an ode for a royal wedding, another curiously arranged so as to have its lines begin with the letters of the alphabet in order; psalms of praise and prayer, psalms of malediction, psalms of retrospect, psalms of thanksgiving, psalms of penitence; some of them filled with the love of God, so that they give us words to-day for the most exalted Christian feeling; some of them filled with the hatred of enemies, where the poet wishes that he might wash his foot-

steps in the blood of the ungodly, and would see his dog's tongue red through the same. Then the Proverbs, a series of prudent sayings, a book of wise counsels for the moral government of life. After that, Ecclesiastes, written by one whose questioning of himself and of the universe is so profound and stern that the reader is in doubt at the end of the book whether the author believed or denied the immortality of the soul. "The man," he says, "hath no advantage over the beast, for both are vanity: both go to the same places; both sprang from dust, and both turn into dust." Then the Song of Solomon, a romance, a play, an operetta, in which only the allegorists can find a suggestion of religion.

After the poets come the prophets, the preachers, the men who speak for God. And in the midst of their sermons two other compositions in which imagination is summoned to impress the truths of revelation,—the book of Jonah and the book of Daniel. Then follows the New Testament, made up of biography, history and letters, and ending with the cryptogramic poetry of the vision of St. John.

This is the inspired book: this is the result of inspiration. Inspiration, thus judged by its fruits, is the spiritual force which produces such a book, or library of books, as this.

The Bible shows what inspiration is not. It is not a substitute for thought, or investigation, or study; neither does it secure accuracy of detail. There is nothing in its pages to show that the men who wrote them wrote in any strange or peculiar way. It is true that we read in our English translation that "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God"; but we know that the accurate reading is that of the Revised Version where it stands, "All Scripture inspired of God is profitable for teaching." It is to be remembered that St. Luke, speaking for the sacred historians, begins his account of the life of our Lord by telling us frankly that he has studied the matter with great pains; he has diligently found out all the facts he can: he has made all possible investigation, questioned everybody, read whatever he could find, and set down the results. It is what any conscientious historian will say.

St. Paul is continually putting things into his letters which show that he never dreamed of the use to which these writings are now put. Not one of them was composed like an essay or a treatise. Not one had in mind any remote future. The apostle wrote as we do, answering the questions of his correspondents, dealing with matters of present and local

moment, sending personal messages to his friends. He cannot remember, he says, how many persons he baptized in Corinth. Only Crispus and Gaius, he thinks. But wait,—yes, and all the household of Stephanus and perhaps some others, he knows not. It is as informal, as natural, as familiar as any serious letter which the postman will carry in his bag to-morrow. St. Paul is even doubtful in some cases of the accuracy of his own judgment. "I think," he says, "I have the spirit of God." Any earnest man may say as much.

Accordingly, the inspired book forbids any theory of inspiration which is inconsistent with the use by the inspired historian of materials gathered from various sources; or which forbids a poet to try what sort of verse he can write by having the successive lines begin with the successive letters of the alphabet; or which prevents the historian from making honest errors of detail, or the poet or the prophet from falling into honest errors even of moral judgment.

What, then, do we mean when we say that these books are inspired?

We mean, in the first place, that they are filled with the spirit of religion. And here we answer at once the question of those who ask for the difference between the inspiration of

Isaiah and the inspiration of Shakespeare. They were both inspired. All achievement is inspired of God. The Greek philosophers were inspired: the Latin legislators were inspired. They were all breathed upon of God, who have in any way enriched the life of man. But the inspiration of these Bible writers was in the direction not of letters, not of art, not of philosophy, and not of politics, but of religion. Theirs was a religious inspiration. By the grace of God they were men of religion, delighting in it, supremely devoted to it, caring for it as their contemporaries cared for wealth or conquest, the original possessors and revealers of religious truth.

And here we touch a second note in the meaning of inspiration. These men, we say, were blessed with an inspiration different from that of Dante or Shakespeare, because it had to do essentially with religion. But how did their inspiration differ, then, from that of other teachers of religion, from Augustine, from Bernard, from Luther, from the modern men whose books feed our souls? The answer is that the inspiration of the Bible men was primary: other inspiration is secondary. The great truth came from God to them, and they proclaimed it. From them it came to Augustine and Luther and the others. It is like the relation

of men to truth in the progress of invention. We are in possession to-day of incalculably important physical truth, which dominates the conditions under which we all live: truth about steam, for example, and machinery and electricity. Whence did it come into our life? There was a day when one man was sole possessor of it. He alone knew the great secret. He was the primary person in that region of knowledge, the discoverer of that realm. After that, a great multitude entered into the country thus discovered. But you see the difference between them and him. So with the far more important truths which we possess in relation to things spiritual. These truths which enter into all our thinking were once unknown. Nobody had ever thought of them. The truth of the oneness of God, for example, and then of the fatherhood of God: there was a time when these great ideas flashed in, as we say, upon the soul of one man. There he stood, thinking a thought of God which had never been thought before since the world began. When he declared his thought to his neighbour he said simply that God told him. That is what happened: God spoke to that man. He was an inspired man. They to whom the inspired man spoke were in their turn inspired, and went about teaching and

transforming others: but theirs was a secondary inspiration. His was primary.

Here, then, are two respects in which the inspired book differs from the other books. Its inspiration is in the first place religious; it differs in kind. And it is in the second place primary: it differs in degree.

Inspiration is akin to genius. This is perhaps as near as we can get to an understanding of it. It is in the spiritual realm what genius is in art and letters and affairs. In the one as in the other, the human and the superhuman meet. Inspiration and genius are alike mysterious; and the mystery of the one is the mystery of the other. When we learn the process by which Newton recognized the law of gravitation, we may learn the process by which St. Paul recognized the law of the resurrection of the spiritual body. The man of genius perceives new truth in nature, the man of inspiration perceives new truth in religion.

These men, whether in the Bible or out of it, are men like us, and yet unlike. Homer and Phidias and Cæsar were of like passions with us, they had their human weaknesses in plenty, they shared the ignorance of their age and blundered because of it; but at the same time they were somehow lifted up above

us; somehow the light of God shone in their faces. So it was with Amos and Isaiah, with St. John and St. Paul.

The men who wrote the Bible climbed the mount of God, as Moses of old ascended Sinai. They climbed up step by step, and sometimes stumbled, and were weary. Up they went on their own feet like other men. And there, in the mount, they met God face to face; but in a cloud. In the supreme moment of that meeting, the cloud hides them from our sight.

April 1912

THE CALL TO THE MINISTRY

Behold, I will send My messenger, and he shall prepare the way before Me.—*Mal.* 3 : 1.

Our Lord applied these words to John the Baptist. They belong also to every other minister of God. Indeed, they describe the mission and the service of every helpful man, whether in the ministry or out of it. Many a man has heard this call of God and has obeyed it as a lawyer, as a physician, as a merchant, as a citizen, as a neighbor.

The chief difference between the man in the ministry and the man not in the ministry is that the one is so situated that he can give the whole of his time to the community, while the other must, in most cases, take some of his time for the support of his family. The minister's salary is the money which is paid by the people of the parish that he may have nothing else to do but attend to them.

I purpose to speak of the work of the ministry according to the common meaning of that word, but almost everything which is to be said of the minister applies to all good Christians. We would have men undertake

the definite and distinctive errands of the ministry of the church, but we also want everybody, "in his vocation and ministry,"—as the Prayer Book says, taking the clerical word and applying it to the people,—we want everybody to feel himself called to be a messenger of heaven, no matter what his occupation; called to enter into that service whose purpose is to bring heaven out of the sky into our streets.

The chief officer in ancient Rome was the man who built the bridges, the pontifex. There he sat enthroned above his fellows, the municipal commissioner of highways, to whom was committed the care of the streets and of the gates, and of the crossings of the river. It is worth while to remember this homely origin of the high word "pontifical." Whoever builds a road, exercises a pontifical function. When Mr. Ruskin desired to give his students an opportunity of social service, he took them out into the country close by Oxford to mend a road. It is said that they did not mend it very well, being unskilled in that art; but the endeavor was significantly right. It was a symbol of all ministry.

The road which the minister is to build runs through a difficult country. It is all hill and valley, as Isaiah said. The minister's business

is to fill every valley, and level every mountain, and to make the crooked places straight and the rough places plain. The specifications have been set to music; there they are in the oratorio of the Messiah, for the chorus and the orchestra, so that nobody who has heard that splendid singing can ever read them afterwards without the echoes of those harmonies ringing in his ears. But they are specifications, nevertheless: directions for the construction of a road. They involved problems of spiritual engineering which have never yet been solved.

A good deal of attention is being given at present to the fact that there is a decrease in the number of persons who attend the churches. This decrease is not so large nor so serious as it is sometimes represented. Indeed, the situation as compared with that of a century ago is most encouraging. Then there was indifference and loss and foreboding all along the Christian line. The church was especially in despair about the college. At Princeton there were only a few students who acknowledged that they were Christians; at Yale there was hardly one; at Harvard—outside the small number of men preparing for the ministry—there was none at all. To-day, the college everywhere is Christian, and the church

enters the new century in the consciousness of strength and in the fervor of faith.

Nevertheless, the fact remains that there are empty places in all the churches which should be filled by heads of families, and by those whose splendid social and beneficent activity during the week seems to take a rest on Sunday. In the country, all the churches feel the discouragement of vacant pews: though here, the cause is often to be found in a general decrease of the rural population; the town grows smaller, and the congregation, of course, grows smaller.

Another similar fact is that there is a decrease in the number of applicants for ordination. Such is the general report from the universities of Europe and of England, and from the colleges of America. Here again, there is a possible misunderstanding. The proportion of college men who go into the ministry has manifestly diminished. But the difference is in some measure accounted for by the fact that until comparatively recent years the minister was the only man for whom a college education was considered necessary. The doctor, and even the lawyer, could get along without it. The business man had no use for it. That distinction has now passed away. The result is that the college

has grown to its present proportions by the addition of men who are preparing for various other occupations. Nevertheless, there is a decrease in the number of ordinations, which is more than relative.

This decrease is attributed by some persons to the higher criticism. It is continually harder, they say, in the face of the new light which is being brought to bear upon religion, in the presence of the new truths which enter now into the interpretation of the Bible, to accept the doctrines of the Christian church. Men will go to the services of the church as laymen, exercising the layman's large privilege of quiet dissent, but they cannot consistently act as teachers. They are not able, as intelligent and honest men, to teach what the church teaches.

There are undoubtedly doctrines which have been put forward out of all measure of right perspective, and have been asserted to be of the essence of the Christian gospel, which are discredited by the higher criticism. In this case, truth and error have come into contention, and the new truth has triumphed over the old error. Such Christian communions as have unhappily committed themselves to the losing side in this discussion must meet the inevitable consequences. They must not be sur-

prised if men who have the spirit of the ministry pass them by and seek their opportunity elsewhere. The Christian Church is set to teach the truth of God. Whatever is the truth is the message of God and is divinely intended to prepare the way of God. No error, however venerable, however enshrined in sacred formulas, is worth the truth. If the diminishing lists of ordination candidates signifies a diminishing zeal for truth on the part of the Christian churches, then let us thank God that our condition is thus sharply brought to our attention.

But the higher criticism is the friend both of the truth and of the Church. It comes, as the new science came a generation ago, as an ally not as an enemy. It has vindicated the right of the Bible to be intelligently understood, and in so doing has wonderfully illuminated it, made it alive again for us, brought it close to common life. It has been sometimes extravagant, sometimes exasperating, sometimes mistaken. It has suffered, like all endeavors after truth, from the follies of enthusiastic disciples. And, as always happens, people who ought to have known better, have taken the enthusiastic folly for the sober conclusion. The time, however, has now come when the chief contributions of the higher

criticism are accepted by all persons who really know how to read and write. And the great statements of the Christian creeds stand firm as ever.

No; it is not so much the higher criticism which is keeping men out of the ministry, as the lower salary. There is no money in the work of the ministry. Almost every successful minister could have earned more salary in some other occupation. The material prizes of life do not come in the minister's way. And these tangible rewards are to most men exceedingly attractive. The alert young man who sees a vision of his future finds there a good house to live in, a good account at the bank, sufficient means for the comforts and adornments and privileges of society, and the distinction and satisfaction which accompany financial strength. These things he wants. And the ministry cannot promise to put him in possession of them.

To these discouragements of the higher criticism and of the lower salary, are to be added the inevitable difficulties which arise from the nature of the ministry and from the nature of the minister.

The nature of the ministry makes the work difficult. Consider the mission of the minister: he is to be the messenger of God, and to pre-

pare the way of God. As God's messenger he is to spiritualize society. He is to maintain resolutely in the face of incredulous auditors, that the invisible is better than the visible, that the future is more important than the present, that the soul is more precious than the body. And this he is to do in a prosperous generation, given to material interests.

As the preparer of God's way he is to socialize society. He is to insist upon fraternity; to set himself against everything in the life about him which is against brotherhood, to overlook and overpass all foolish barriers, to defy ancient prejudices, to get the social ideals of Jesus realized in common life,—a very different thing from getting people to read books or hear sermons about them. And he is to do this in an individualistic generation, strongly tempted to selfishness.

It is like rowing against the tide; he rows and rows and rows, and seems to make no progress. There he is in the river between a mill on one side and a mansion on the other, and there he stays; with all his putting forth of strength he seems unable to make any change in his relation to the mansion or the mill—they still confront him.

This difficulty in the nature of the ministry

is aggravated by the nature of the minister. He is tempted by all the temptations of his people. He needs his own sermons. Often he has to comfort himself with the reflection that his preaching is a means of grace to himself, whether it helps the congregation or not. He has to fight the devil not only in the community but in his own soul. And he gets on but a brief distance in his ministerial life before he learns that the one thing which counts in the work to which he is called is not learning, nor manners, nor eloquence, nor any sort of ability, so much as personal character. He helps by what he is. And when he considers what he is, his soul is filled with dismay.

Moreover, he is conscious of new and subtle temptations, peculiar to his calling, which are pulling him down, and making him worse rather than better. Then he understands what was meant by the saint who feared lest having preached to others he himself might be a castaway. And he reads with a new meaning and a new application our Lord's words in the Sermon on the Mount, when He said, "Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name, and in Thy name have cast out devils, and in Thy name have done many wonderful works? And then

I will profess unto them, I never knew you." Who are these who account themselves even the familiar friends of the Son of God, and then find that He never knew them? They are the ministers of religion, who have saved the whole parish and lost their own souls.

The work of the ministry is hard work. It is no wonder that men feel in all honest humility that they are not equal to it.

I have thus dealt with the difficulties of the ministry, partly for the sake of the sympathetic understanding of the congregation, but still more in the hope that some young man, within the reach of these words, may find in them a call to his own soul. The church needs more ministers, but they must be men who have the spirit of the ministry. Such men will be surrounded not by the dignities but by the difficulties of the position.

For all the barriers across the way into the ministry, God be praised.

There is a diminishing attendance at the services and a diminishing number of men are asking for holy orders. Let all who are in search of ease or popularity take notice. But let the strong man stop and think. Does church attendance mean anything vital and necessary to the life of a people? Is it or is it not, related to their standard of morals, to

their civic and social demeanor, to their ideals? Has the Christian minister an essential work to do in his proclamation of the message of God and in his preparation of the way of God? Is the work worth doing? Is there need of men to do it? When these questions are answered in the affirmative, discouragements become incentives. If there is a great work to be done for God and man, and if it is not being very effectually done, then it is plain that God is summoning the men who believe in it, and can do it, to come in with their strength.

I am sorry that church attendance is decreasing and that fewer men are coming into the ministry; but I am glad, also. For it means, I hope, that the church and the ministry are being delivered from the burden of an unconsecrated laity and of an indifferent or self-seeking clergy. The worst thing that ever happened to the church was the conversion of Constantine. Constantine came in, and Dives with him, the devil acting as usher. The church became popular,—in a bad way. She met the woe which is pronounced in the Sermon on the Mount on those of whom all kinds of men—the foolish as well as the wise, the evil as well as the good,—say pleasant things. That was worse than all the persecutions put

together. It became easier to be a Christian than not.

Now if the time shall come again when there shall be no remotest relation between church attendance and social advantage, and when no wise man shall enter the ministry of the church expecting to get any possible worldly benefit thereby, then we may look for a return of the old days of faith and devotion. When the Christian church is composed of Christian people, when membership in it and ministry in it mean unusual character, then the Kingdom of God, whose way the church is intended to prepare, is nigh at hand.

So with the difficulties and the obstacles which confront the minister: difficulties of believing and of living, obstacles in the work and in the worker,—they are like the examination which keeps guard at the college and at the public office to see that only the right men get in. The right man does not fear them. On he goes in spite of them into the joy of the ministry.

There are difficulties of believing. Men are beset with doubt. Thoughtful people are asking questions and are getting no good answers. And these are imperative and essential questions, which everybody must somehow answer for the satisfaction of his soul,

for the right being of his life, for strength and comfort in the face of inevitable grief: questions about God, questions about the revelation of God in Jesus Christ, questions about duty, questions about the significance of pain, questions about the next day after death. They are greatly in error who fancy that the day of doctrinal teaching is done. The day of dogmatic teaching is indeed done, when the preacher said you must believe this because I tell you that it is true. But we are living in a time when men are profoundly interested in the assertions of the Christian Creed, and want light and conviction. To make these assertions plain to the common reason; to set them forth in such simple, natural, appealing words that they shall be appreciated by the people who sit in the back seats on Sunday evenings; to bring them into relation with actual life in its trials, its crises, its discouragements, its manifold perplexities; to guide, to strengthen, to console; this is the joy of the ministry. The minister sits in his study and gathers about him the great books of his time and of all time, and makes their great thoughts available for his people.

There are difficulties of living, of making the ends meet, of supporting a family on a

meagre income. These problems the minister does not face alone. They belong to the lot of a majority of his parishioners. The men and women who go to his church are engaged as he is in the hard endeavor to live a large life on a small salary. The fact brings him into intelligent sympathy with them. He understands their worries. He knows why they make such small contributions to domestic missions: they have their own domestic missions. He understands the importunity with which the interests of the common day demand their time, and how hard it is for the men of his parish to get away from the store. In this likeness between his lot and theirs is the minister's opportunity. Here his example counts. The kind of life which he lives under these adverse conditions impresses the community greatly for good or ill. The cheerful minister makes a cheerful parish. The parsonage whose plain living does not prevent high thinking, where frugality in the pleasures of the table makes possible a beautiful prodigality in the delights of books and pictures, where it is daily demonstrated that money is not essential to the best happiness, but that taste and ingenuity and a sense of humor and the serenity of faith and the warmth of love will more than make up for the lack of it,—

such a parsonage preaches a sermon of its own, and the smoke of its chimney ascends to God straight as the smoke of silver censers. To live that life in the midst of one's people, with them and for them, is to enter into peace and joy.

So, too, with the obstacles in the nature of the ministry and in the nature of the minister. To overcome them: to deliver the message of God, to prepare the way of God, in spite of them, even by means of them; is a blessed undertaking.

I have dealt almost entirely with the difficulties of the ministry. And yet I have meant the sermon to be an invitation. Into this great work, with its hardships as well as its blessings, God summons every man whose heart responds. That response is an assurance of the Divine appeal. If these opportunities appeal to any man, so that he sees here a work worth doing for God and his neighbor, and is inclined to do it; if he is the sort of man to whom a difficulty is as the sound of trumpets; such a man sees God beckoning him this day. He is called of God to the work of the ministry.

THE MESSIANIC EXPECTATION

Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.—*Luke* 2 : 10, 11.

It is a Christmas text, but I intend to preach an Advent sermon. The words of the angel stand between Advent and Christmas like the dawn between the night and the day. Here the seasons change ; here the Old Testament ends and the New Testament begins ; here expectation rises into fulfilment. Let us listen then to these two notes which sound in this celestial music, expectation and fulfilment. What did the announcement mean on Christmas Eve to those Jewish shepherds ? and what does it mean to us, keeping our Christmas Eve in the warmth and light of all the Christian centuries ?

The Messianic expectation found its first expression in the Hebrew prophets. It is plain, however, in the earliest of them that it was a common attitude of mind. Indeed, it goes back so far that the Old Testament people made it coeval with the race itself. Adam and Eve, they said, in Eden, turned their

faces to the future, and anticipated the time when a son of theirs should bruise the head of that old serpent, the devil. In the days of Amos, however, most men were looking for a day of general settlement in which the enemies of Israel would get their deserts, but all Israel would be blessed. This pleasant anticipation Amos rudely interrupted. He saw in the Day of the Lord a universal visitation of the wrath of God, from which not one of his congregation might hope to escape.

Then came Hosea, maintaining like Amos, the certain destruction of the wicked, but bringing as his message from on high the equally certain persistence of the love of God. In the sight of the wickedness of the people, he foresaw the inevitable approach of punishment, but he had faith to believe that punishment would be remedial. He read in his own tender heart a revelation of God permitting punishment and general misery not in anger so much as in sorrow, as a sharp but necessary lesson which some of the people would learn, and having learned it would return to God in penitence. And he declared that such a penitent nation would be blessed. In the midst of the darkness he saw a great light. The future, he said, shall be better than the present: the best is yet to be.

To this expectation, Isaiah brought his doctrine of the remnant. That is, he emphasized the hope that though the nation should be destroyed, yet a remnant should escape and be saved and thus become the beginning of a righteous people, a little colony which should grow into a Kingdom of God. This idea Isaiah made his own by his continual insistence on it. He saw the axe laid at the root of the national tree, and expected that it would fall, but out of the roots he saw a new stem growing into a new and greater tree. The Messianic expectation then, as it was taught by Hosea and Isaiah, involved vast calamities which should try men's souls, the sea and the waves roaring, men's hearts failing them for fear, after which should come a reign of righteousness and peace. In that good time Israel should be the world-power, holding Egypt and Assyria as subject provinces.

As Isaiah and Hosea agreed in the expectation of the Golden Age, so Isaiah and Micah agreed in declaring that it should be brought about and ruled over by a Saviour of the people. Micah saw him a peasant, coming like David the shepherd, from the simplicity of the farm and the sheepfold. But Isaiah has no words large and high enough to describe him adequately. "The government,"

he said, "shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, the Mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace."

These four men lived all in the same half century. They came together in the latter part of the eighth century before Christ. They all confronted the same national danger, the invasion of the Assyrians. In the time of Amos and Mosea this danger was on the far horizon. In the time of Micah it had overtaken the northern kingdom and destroyed it. In the time of Isaiah the Assyrian had come down like a wolf on the fold, and was hammering at the gates of Jerusalem. These men gave the Messianic expectation form and a voice. By the grace of God, they brought it definitely into human consciousness.

When we say that they originated the Messianic idea we mean that they did for it what Darwin and Wallace and Huxley and Spencer did for the idea of evolution. They did not invent it. They became aware of it. They became aware of the fact that there is a Divine principle of progress in the world, whereby through all manner of obstacles and over all impediments and in spite of protest and distress, God is working out the development of righteousness among men, as the river

flows into the sea. I compared it to evolution: that is a fair description of it. The Messianic expectation corresponds in the realm of the spirit to the doctrine of evolution in the realm of matter. It made history and experience intelligible. It strengthened the people of Israel to endure disaster after disaster, confident that even in their deepest misery all things were somehow working together for good. "Though He slay me," they said, "yet will I trust in Him."

To this expectation, as the prophets of the eighth century taught it, other centuries added details. Thus far the hope of the future was a prophecy of national happiness. It had to do with the nation. Then Jeremiah came, the prophet of the individual; and after him Ezekiel, the prophet of the institution. That is, Jeremiah declared the care of God for every man, and maintained that the destiny of every man depends upon himself; and Ezekiel assembled men, the survivors of a broken and ruined nation, into a church. By and by in the second century, the book of Daniel, with its apocalyptic images and visions, mightily affected the minds of thoughtful men. And out of all this came the Messianic hope in the form in which it stirred men's souls in the year one.

The Bethlehem shepherds, in common with their neighbors, expected three events: *first*, a battle between God and Satan, between the powers of good and the powers of ill, between the Jews and the Gentiles; *second*, a judgment pronounced by triumphant righteousness upon all workers of iniquity, especially upon the heathen, who would be condemned, some said to slavery with the Jews for masters, some said to everlasting fire; and *third*, a kingdom, the Kingdom of God, established here on earth, with the saints for citizens, with the heavenly Jerusalem for capital, having nowhere in it any poverty, any oppression, any pain, any sorrow or crying, or any sin. Some held that this kingdom, this ideal commonwealth, this state of social satisfaction, should be at once established, if necessary by force. These were the zealots, the Socialist party, made up mostly of the poor and the discontented. Others held that the kingdom, though infinitely desirable, would best be brought about by prayer and patience and the providential course of events. These were the Pharisees, the conservative folk, well-to-do, having no immediate individual grievance. The Pharisees hated the Zealots, as men of moderate minds, in the days before the civil war, hated the Abolitionists, and for the same

reason. But all agreed that these three events, the battle, the judgment and the kingdom, should be brought about by a fourth event which should precede them all, the Advent of the Messiah, of the Anointed One—anointed, as the manner of the Jews was, in token of his place and work as the messenger of God,—called in Greek, the Christ. Christ should lead the forces of the good against the forces of the bad: Christ should sit upon the uplifted seat of judgment, to bless the Jews and curse the Gentiles: Christ should rule over the Kingdom of God.

This Messianic expectation was in every Jewish heart. This it was to which the souls of the shepherds responded instinctively, with fear and gladness, when the sky blazed above them, and the choirs of angels sang, and the voice said, "Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all the people; for unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ, the Lord."

Such was the expectation. Let us now consider how He who was then called Christ, the Lord, fulfilled it.

He declared plainly that He came to fulfil this Messianic expectation. Twice He permitted His disciples to call Him Christ: once at Cæsarea Philippi, when He said, "Whom say

ye that I am?" and Peter answered, "Thou art the Christ"; again at Jerusalem, when He entered the city on Palm Sunday attended by a great multitude singing in procession, "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord." Twice He declared openly that He was the Messiah, long expected. Once when John the Baptist sent to ask Him, "Art Thou He that should come?" and Jesus answered by healing the sick and helping the poor, doing Messianic service, showing His credentials and saying, "Go and tell John what you have seen and heard." Again when the high priest presiding at His trial, said, "I adjure Thee by the living God that Thou tell us whether Thou be the Christ," and Jesus said, "I am," and added to this plain declaration a statement which perplexes us, but which they who heard it recognized clearly to be a claim to the possession of all the Messianic power and to the fulfilment in Himself of all the Messianic prophecy: "Hereafter shall ye see the son of man sitting on the right hand of power and coming in the clouds of heaven." That was the common symbol of the Messiah conquering and judging and reigning. That was the way in which they expressed it in the language of religion. The moment He said that, the High Priest rose up in horror, crying, "We need no

further witness. You have heard His own words: what is your verdict?" and they all said, "He is guilty of death."

I have taken these four passages to confirm and illustrate the constant Messianic quality of the life of Jesus. From the time of His baptism, if not before, He knew that He was the Christ, in whom the centuries of Messianic expectation had found fulfilment. He was appointed to be the Saviour of the world; He was to lead the armies of God against the devil, He was to sit in judgment over the whole race of man, He was to be the ruler of the righteous kingdom of the world to come.

You see at once how different this was from the position of any philanthropist or philosopher or prophet. He went about doing good, He taught a beautiful and gentle doctrine of the love of God and man, He touched the depths and the heights of spiritual truth. Sometimes for an entire chapter this seems to be the whole of it; and we think of Him as a saint and a sage, living for our example and inspiration a simple, self-sacrificing, uplifted life. But we turn the page and come suddenly upon one of these marvelous, revealing sentences, and it is as if we had been pleasantly walking along the sunny slopes of a familiar hill and had stumbled upon the discovery that the

whole heart of it was fire. The Messianic expectation and the consciousness that in Him it was fulfilled placed Him completely outside the ordinary classifications of men. He went about the roads of Palestine, the heir of all the ages, Son of Man and Son of God, knowing that He held in His hand the everlasting destiny of every man, knowing that He was the rightful ruler of the planet, the King of humanity, the Lord of all. "I am from above," He said.

Jesus fulfilled the Messianic expectation in its essentials. He dealt with the prophets as with the law, correcting and spiritualizing their words: "You have heard it said by them of old time, thus and so, but the truth is this." Thus He took the *battle* of Messiah against Satan and showed that it is fought in every human heart. It is true that He chose a zealot to be one of the Twelve, but He gave no encouragement to the revolutionary plans of social discontent. As for the restoration of the Jewish people to the throne of David, and the subjugation of the Greeks and Romans, and the establishment of a world-power, He took no step in that direction. The disciples could not understand it. To the very last, they hoped to sit on thrones, and asked, "Wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom

to Israel?" He said, "My kingdom is not of this world"; "the Kingdom of God is within you"; the valley of the decision, the battlefield of the eternal forces, is your own soul.

He took the *judgment* of Messiah, deciding between the evil and the good, and changed the qualifications. The Pharisees were teaching men that, if they wished to be approved of God, they must keep the Sabbath, mind the rules of ceremonial purity, and do a great many things which had been added to the law which was written in the Bible. Jesus depicted a day of judgment in which no reference was made to any of these matters, the conditions of acceptance with God being neither ceremonial nor ecclesiastical, nor even doctrinal, but wholly ethical. The good people are good, He said; that is their characteristic. They are friendly folk, useful and helpful, loving their neighbors and showing their love by their fraternal ministration: of such is the Kingdom of Heaven. You make distinctions between the ritually clean and the ritually unclean in articles of food, but men are not defiled by that which they eat, but by the evil words which they speak, bearing witness to an evil heart. This contradicted the whole Pharisaic system, and made the Pharisees His enemies.

He took the *Kingdom* of Messiah and erased from it all marks of Jewish privilege. He questioned the tradition that the Christ should be in any national sense the son of David, for that implied the establishment of a Jewish kingdom. He pointed out that even in the tradition David called Him Lord: He was over David. He said that "Many should come from the east and from the west and should sit down in the Kingdom of Heaven, but that the children of the kingdom should be cast out." He opened the privileges of God to the whole family of man.

All this He did, fulfilling the Messianic expectation but not completing it. He continued it. Taking it out of all its local limitations and making it a part of the life of the whole race, He strengthened, purified, and extended it. The season of advent is not kept in commemoration of an ancient dream come true, of a great chapter of a closed book, of an event in history. Jesus found men in the attitude of expectation, and the effect of His life and death and resurrection was to justify that attitude and confirm it. The Messiah must first prepare the world for the Kingdom of God; thus He came in His great humility. Then shall He judge the world, and thereafter reign forever in His glorious majesty.

Of the two last things which He said before He went out of sight, the first was this: "Ye shall be witnesses unto Me"; and the second was this: "I will come again."

Herein is contained the present meaning of the Messianic expectation. It means social service and individual responsibility.

Christ came and set man not to dreaming but to working. The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand, He said, but its advent waits upon the endeavors of good people. It must be sought, and brought to pass; and this involves an unceasing effort to make this present world happier and better. Thus the Messiah sent His disciples to heal the sick and preach the gospel. They were to minister both to the souls and to the bodies of men. Thereby He defined the Messianic social duty. In the light of that duty we ought to ask ourselves, "What am I doing to increase and distribute that great joy of which the Advent angel sang on Christmas Eve? What contribution am I making, first in my own home, and then outside, to the happiness of life? In what respect is the small world in which I live better at this moment because of me?" It is one thing to have a vision of an ideal commonwealth, and to have faith that God will some day make it true; but it is another and a better thing, to realize

that such a vision can be made true only as we ourselves coöperate with God.

Indeed, whether we like it or not, and whether we are doing anything about it or not, we are individually responsible. To the call to social service is thus added the warning of individual responsibility. The Messianic Kingdom shall surely come, but our place in it will be determined by the results of a judgment. Jesus Christ found that expectation when He came, and confirmed it. We shall every one be judged of God. We shall some day stand each of us in His presence and be judged. Jesus Christ, both God and man, knowing as God the ideal of a righteous life and knowing as man the temptations which beset us—He will pronounce upon our destiny. The Messianic expectation implies the unspeakable importance of moral decisions. It means that day by day, as we say "yes" and "no," we are determining our eternal future. He who came on Christmas Day to save us from our sins will come again. "Behold," He says, "I come quickly." God, give us grace that we may answer out of a good conscience, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

April 1912.

THE CASTING OUT OF FEAR

And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them; and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not.—*Luke* 2: 9.

THE moment the angel saw the Christmas shepherds, he perceived that they were afraid. That was perfectly plain. The light flamed in the sky above them, the glory of it filled the fields about them, the brown grass of the winter pasture shone like gold, the wool on the sheep's backs was colored like the sky so that the shepherds seemed to have in charge the flock of the golden fleece. The men's hearts were lifted up with sudden wonder, but more with fear. The celestial apparition frightened them. The sight was one of splendor, not of dread; but in Rembrandt's picture even the sheep are scared. The shepherds drew a swift, instinctive inference of ill. The gates of heaven opened, the glory of the Lord shone out, and every shepherd thrust up his elbow between him and the light as if to ward away an enemy.

The truth is that even to this day, after all the long centuries of our residence upon this

planet, we are not yet quite at home here. We are not in familiar and confident accord with our surroundings. We live in expectation of evil, as our forefathers lived in expectation of Indians. The settler built his house in the midst of the clearing, surrounded by the forest. The woods were thick and dark and very imperfectly explored. Every unwonted snapping of a twig suggested danger. A strange sound at night, in the dark, recalls us instantly to that primitive position. What did I hear? What did it mean? What form of evil lurks in the surrounding shadows? Our reason, it is true, comes to our rescue, and laughs us out of our alarm. But the alarm is the natural, human emotion. The unknown is presumably unfriendly.

This is hardly the result of personal experience. No Indians have ever come out of our woods; no ghosts or burglars have disturbed our rest. The natural powers have treated us with constant kindness. So far as our own experience goes, the unknown is good, means good, and brings good. And this cheerful interpretation of the world is asserted also by our faith. Indeed, both Christianity and civilization take man by the hand, like a child in the dark, and tell him, like the Christmas angel, that he need not fear. The persistence

of fear shows the strength of the primitive instinct.

Think, then, of the world upon whose darkness shone the light of heaven's open gates. The whole world lay in fear.

Men were afraid of God. God was manifested chiefly in the world of nature, which nobody understood. The world of nature seemed a world of chance. It was represented by the weather, which was now bright, now dark, now still, now stormy, nobody knew why. God revealed Himself every day in the weather, and men were afraid of Him. He seemed a capricious person, sometimes friendly, sometimes unfriendly, changing from one mood to another with no ascertainable reason. His conduct was past calculating. Suddenly, without the smallest provocation, He would send storm and tempest, fire, flood, plague or famine.

The chief purpose of popular religion was to get on the good side of God. It was an expression of fear. It was an endeavor of man to protect himself against God. What does God like? He likes ceremonies and sacrifices. Let us, then, be very careful about these matters. What does God dislike? Evidently, He dislikes whatever brings bad luck. Bad luck, men said, is the result of the divine displeasure.

Somehow, it came to be believed that the left is the unlucky side. It was considered an affront to God to look at the moon over one's left shoulder. Whoever did that felt that God would punish him. One day, the Emperor Augustus, who sent out the decree that all the world should be taxed, set his left foot on the floor before his right, on getting out of bed in the morning. Thereupon he got back into bed, and stayed there. He did not dare to face a day which was begun in that inauspicious fashion. He was sure that God would bring disaster upon every undertaking of that day, in revenge for the disrespect of that left foot. Think what a conception of the unfriendliness of God is implied in such a superstition. With such fear of the unknown in the midst of the intelligence of the palace, what must have been the continual dread which beset the souls of men in the ignorance of the cottage.

One time, the Jews, encamped at the base of Sinai, believed that God was on the top of that mountain. There was a wild storm raging, the peak was covered with black clouds, and out of the clouds came fire and the sound of a voice. And the people were in a state of terror. They said to Moses, "You go up and find out what God says, and tell us. But don't let God speak in our ears, lest we die." They

ought to have begun to sing "Nearer, My God, to Thee, nearer to Thee." But that was precisely opposite to their desire. So, also, the shepherds, seeing the sky begin to blaze with light celestial, thought that God was coming; and they were horribly afraid. That is, even among those who were best instructed in religion, men were in fear of God. Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God with all thy heart, seemed the first and great commandment.

The second, Thou shalt fear thy neighbor, seemed equally an expression of the meaning of the facts of human life. Men were everywhere afraid of men. The note of fear in the story of the shepherds has its source in the thought of God, but the note of fear in the other Christmas story of the wise men begins with the thought of Herod. All the wisdom of the wise men did not prevent them from being afraid of Herod. Indeed, they showed their wisdom in their fear. Herod was a proper person of whom to be afraid. It is true that his slaughter of the children of Bethlehem was not recorded in the common chronicles of the time, but worse things are there set down concerning him.

Not many of the rulers were so bad as Herod. Or is it only that we are not so well acquainted with the tragedy of their lives? Anyhow,

they were bad enough. They oppressed the people. So did the nobles, so did the rich, so did almost everybody who was strong enough to hurt his neighbor. It is true that the Roman law was good, and that there were just men who endeavored to enforce it. But the general impression which is conveyed to the reader of the history of the Roman Empire is that cruelty and fear walked in all streets. Remember only the amusements of the time, and follow in imagination the audience as they go home from the stadium to their own houses. How will men and women who have been delighting in the spectacle of murder, deal with their domestic servants? The poor man was beaten and trodden under foot. That was the lot of whole populations. The world was filled with fear. Overhead was God, on every hand was man. The general aspect of life was unfriendly.

Then came the Christmas angels singing their new song of joy and love. "Fear not," cries the herald, reassuring the scared shepherds. "Glory to God in the highest," sings the celestial chorus, "and on earth peace, good will towards men." You see how the carol met with its music the two kinds of fear under which men lay trembling. "Peace on earth," where men were sore afraid of men;

and good will from heaven that men may no longer be afraid of God.

He who was born on Christmas Day came that He might cast out fear. He has not succeeded yet in that high mission, if we are to measure success by the disposition of the least receptive. But that is not the way to measure it. Even in His own day, while He spoke face to face with men, the two old fears continued. By and by, the Christian religion itself increased them. To the fear of God derived from nature, whereby men dreaded what He might do to them in this present world, was added a fear of God derived from Scripture, whereby men dreaded what He might do to them in the world to come. To the fear of man, aggravated by natural brute enmity and ambition, was added a fear of man, aggravated by the zeal of religion. It seemed as if the Christmas message had met with defiance and contradiction at the hands of Christians, and as if the coming of the Prince of Peace had but justified and deepened all the ancient terrors which He meant to drive away. What did they preach about on Christmas Day in the Dutch churches while the Duke of Alva and his Christian soldiers were pounding at the gates? The doctrine of the wrath of God within, and the crying of the inquisition

without, must have perplexed the preacher in his interpretation of the Christmas text.

It is hard to realize the great patience of God, and to accept the fact of the slow progress of good. The Christian spirit enters into our general human life like the elemental forces, and takes its place with the other influences which gradually but invincibly change the character of the race. God has all the time there is, and there seems to be a great deal of it. Little by little, even atom by atom, the coral reef is lifted up above the surface of the sea. It is a symbol of the divine method. After the same manner, man is lifted up out of deeps of ignorance and sin and fear. The spiritual force, like the natural force, works without haste but without rest. Storms come and seem to sweep all back into primeval chaos; but the force continues. By and by the time comes when the dullest eye sees the effect. Jesus Christ, when He came, brought with Him into this world an everlasting spiritual force whose final result shall be the casting out of fear. He introduced into our life a love of God and a love of man in the face of which fear cannot abide. We have already got a long way past the old formula, "Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man": that is not the Christian sum-

mary of the law. He whose name hallows this day said, "Love God and your neighbor": love, not fear, is the fulfilling of the law.

Christ came that He might cast out the fear of God. He would have us stand in holy awe of God, and reverence Him, and be assured that in the supreme justice of God, love—even love—expresses itself in the necessary form of punishment. But He would have all this interpreted by the fact of the divine fatherhood. He would have us render a filial reverence. He would have our awe so mingled with affection that the thought of the divine presence is a perpetual joy.

When we read in the Old Testament that God was angry, let us remember that that was said before Christmas. God is never angry. He is much too great for that. Anger goes along with impotence. It is an assertion not only of our disapproval, but of our weakness. It takes the place of effective action. "God is a righteous judge, strong and patient." It is true, every word of it. "And God is provoked every day": no. "If a man will not turn, He will whet His sword": never. God is our Father. If the son will not turn, will the father sharpen his sword? Not if he is a Christian father. The Christmas angels had no swords: neither did they appear to men

who were in armor. The scene was one of peace and gentleness. The word of the annunciation of God was made to men who watched their flocks, to a devout maiden as she said her prayers, to students as they read the wide book of the shining sky. These were all persons in whose daily lives the beatitudes would make no serious interruption. God comes in the likeness of a man, the Eternal reveals Himself in human life, and the man is first a little child in His mother's arms, and then a carpenter, and even after He enters definitely upon His heavenly mission, He behaves Himself so quietly, deals with men in so familiar and brotherly a fashion, and so avoids all that is spectacular and compelling, that His human herald—he who next takes up the Christmas song and puts it into prose—asks in perplexity, "Art Thou He that should come, or do we look for another?" They were looking for a king, or at the least for the commander of an army. The humility of God, the quietness, the patience, the unobtrusiveness of God, the friendliness of God, misled them. They were waiting for a manifestation of God which should make them afraid. Jesus said, "Fear not, little flock." It was the word of the Christmas angel over again. God is never angry with us. Even our sins

are done against His love, not against His wrath.

When we read in the New Testament that God will punish men forever in the unquenchable dungeons of the burning pit, we are to say to ourselves that this is the misconception either of us who read or of those who heard and wrote. Punishment, yes; whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap, yes. But punishment in anger, never in any world. Hell-fire, yes; if no other figure will suffice to convey to our dull minds God's great desire that we shall do His will, and God's strong love which even by pain accomplishes our salvation; but love forever, love everywhere, even in hell. The Christ with the uplifted arm in Michael Angelo's picture of the Last Judgment was not born in Bethlehem; he was born in the hearts of mistaken men, who in all honesty measured him by themselves. There he stands in anger, cursing his enemies. But the real Christ, who is the manifestation of God, prayed for them. Oh, when we see Him face to face, we may be sad, we may be bitterly ashamed, but we shall not be afraid. His perfect love, which we shall then begin to understand, will cast out fear.

Christ came to put away the fear of man. It was indeed a new commandment which He

gave, "That ye love one another." And He made it new beyond all comparison with the wise words of other teachers, when He added the interpretation, "As I have loved you." His birth in the stable at Bethlehem consecrated the affection of the family, blessed the love of fathers and mothers and children, even in the sordid poverty of tenement houses. Nobody is so obscure as to be outside the warm circle of the Christmas benediction. His daily companionship with the Twelve, His affection for Mary and Martha and Lazarus, consecrated friendship. The eternal God manifests Himself in man, and being thus a sharer in our life, sits at humble tables, and takes long walks across the fields of Galilee with humble men, holding out hands of affection to them, saying, "Ye are My friends." Thus, by His example, He blessed the intercourse of simple people, choosing them out in preference to all the great and wise, that thereby He might include us all. His words of mercy, His loving interest in the general life, His endeavor—always in quiet ways—to make the world about Him better, consecrated that larger friendship which shows itself in social service. In Him dwelt all the fulness of the godhead bodily, and He revealed and declared His divinity by going about doing

good, healing the sick, comforting the sad, blessing little children, preaching the everlasting gospel, making people happy. At last, He illuminated even the darkness of death. Taking away fear out of the heart of man, He even took away the fear of death. He made it possible to descend into the valley of that black shadow without ever losing sight of the blessed sky; He showed how all the hills which make the shadow belong to the celestial range of the delectable mountains, and are touched at the top with the same light which shone upon the shepherds.

Thus, wherever He went, fear fled away. They who learned of Him had no more dread, but walked with serene souls through the hard places. They, in their turn, carried the blessing of peace with them. So it comes to us, keeping our Christmas feast with joy and gratitude and love. We celebrate the abolition of fear. We look about us, and perceive indeed that war has not yet ceased, and that cruelty still lingers among men, but we perceive also that the kingdom of peace has much wider boundaries than it had a year ago. We look above us, and over all is the Eternal Father, regarding us with unimaginable affection.

Let us set ourselves against whatever in us or in others perpetuates man's fear of man,

and makes the world unfriendly and unhappy. And let us change all fear of God into the perfect love of Him whose blessed birth the Christmas angels sang, who still says, as of old, "It is I, be not afraid."

April 1913.

IN THE NAME OF GOD

Help us, O Lord our God, for we rest on Thee, and in Thy name we go against this multitude.—2 *Chron.* 14 : 11.

THE fact that this is the first day of a new year finds no place in the service of the church. There is no allusion to it in the scripture lessons; and no appointed prayer makes its appropriate petition. The ancient calendar of the Roman Empire on which Julius and Augustus wrote their names at large, is not the calendar of the Christian seasons. Our New Year's Day comes in November, or at the beginning of December, with the Feast of St. Andrew, or with the First Sunday in Advent. Sometimes the saints' day begins the Christian year, and sometimes the Sunday, according as they come in order; but one or other marks the transition from the old year to the new. We turn the leaf to find on the next page either the name of Him who was the first of all disciples, or else the reminder of His coming who at the last day shall gather all true disciples under His holy and perpetual protection. No emphasis is put upon the first of January.

Indeed, the beginning of the civil year with the first of January is an arrangement which is much later than the prayer-book, and belongs, as you remember, to very modern times. Everybody who pronounces the names of the months thoughtfully perceives that September means the seventh month, October the eighth, November the ninth, and December the tenth; while, in fact, these are the ninth, tenth, eleventh and twelfth months. According to this reckoning, the year begins with March. So, in truth, it did, in England, up to the middle of the eighteenth century. The first of January was not the legal beginning of the year among English-speaking persons until 1752. That is, New Year's Day is one of the most modern of holidays, being later in history than Thanksgiving day, and only a little earlier than the Fourth of July: and it has not yet gained admission to the conservative pages of the Book of Common Prayer. In the Prayer-book, the first of January is observed as the Feast of the Circumcision of Christ.

Nevertheless, in all our hearts, this day is New Year's Eve. We are in the spirit of one who is about to enter upon a new undertaking. Instinctively, we assume the attitude of the old God for whom the month of January was

named, looking two ways, forward and back, remembering the past and questioning the future. The transition from one year to another is, of course, wholly arbitrary. There is no difference in point of fact between to-day and to-morrow. We shall be only twenty-four hours older than we are. But there is a difference in feeling. There is a moral difference. To-day we stand upon the threshold of a new mansion of the soul, purposing to make a new beginning, by the help of God. Our prayers are New Year's prayers. This is indeed the eve of the circumcision. But that is shut up between the covers of the book. We never thought a word about it till we got to church.

Being, however, in church on the Eve of the Feast of the Circumcision of Christ, let us see if we cannot bring the old day and the new together. Are they, indeed, at a remote distance one from the other? Must we assign one to the natural world, of actual human joys and sorrows, and the other to the ecclesiastical world, of symbols and conventions and ancient history? On the contrary, I desire to show that no commemoration could be more appropriate than the remembrance of the circumcision of our Lord on the first day of our new year. They might have tried the

saints' days, one after another, from Andrew at the beginning of the alphabet to the sons of Zebedee at the end; they might have tried the holy seasons, now of praise and now of penitence; nothing could have been selected which should have contained a message more fitting or have conveyed a meaning better adapted to the spiritual needs of the first day of a new year than the festival of the circumcision.

For the circumcision of our Lord, corresponding in this respect to Christian baptism, was the service in which He received His name. "When eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child His name was called Jesus." This, then, is the Festival of the Sacred Name. It stands at the beginning of all our calendar days, as the solemn formula "In the name of God," was recited in old times at the beginning of services, and written at the top of important documents.

In the name of God: that is what we write this day across the top of the first of these three hundred and sixty-five blank leaves.

We mean under the direction of God, protected by Him, guided by Him, depending upon Him: as it says in the proverb—"The name of the Lord is a strong tower, the righteous runneth into it, and is safe." Into the

alternatives of the year, into its perplexities, its manifold temptations, its besetting perils, into the unknown way whose destination no man may predict, we enter in the name of God. "I will strengthen them in the Lord: and they shall walk up and down in His name, saith the Lord." That is, we begin the year with courage and confidence, because we know that all the years are in His hand. When we say In the Name of God, we declare our faith in Him. And this we do at the beginning of the year, in anticipation of all possible disaster.

Nothing is more certain than that sorrow shall come before the end of these twelve months to various members of this company. That is written in the plain course of natural events. It is a part of the inevitable procedure of human life. We shall encounter some disappointment, we shall meet some form of failure, some pain, some bitterness of distress, some great grief. This will not be the lot of all of us, but it will be the destiny of more than one. Let us face it to-day in the name of God. What shall we do about it when it comes, and what shall it do with us? That depends entirely upon the meaning which these words carry to our own souls. If the name of the Lord is in very truth our strong

tower, if He is our mighty fortress, then indeed we shall be safe. If God is a vital reality to us, so that our life is in His life, and our will is His will, and with our hand we hold His hand, then we know that God will lead us, and help us, and bless us, and bring us at last through whatever sorrows into His light and joy perpetual. And that faith will interpret all the days of the new year, begun, continued and ended in the name of God.

The words imply more than the divine protection; they signify our humble obedience. We are to begin the year resolving to do the will of God. Our initial business is to ascertain that we are in honest accord with the divine intention. Is the thing right? Is it of such a nature that we may be sure of His approval? The plans and ambitions of this year, the desires of our hearts, the things which we wish to do and to get, can we consistently bring them before God?

Let us, for example, write the name of God over our individual January accounts. That is, taking the words to imply the submission of all our undertakings to the approval of God, let us consider, as the year begins, how this may apply to such a very practical and homely matter as the regulation of our personal and domestic expenses. For these are not only

concrete facts, easy to examine, and indeed, at this season of the year, demanding examination, but they are also illustrative and significant. They go a good way to reveal the direction of our interests.

I have in mind particularly what is commonly described nowadays as the simple life. Social life tends naturally towards more and more elaboration, and this brings us into the presence of two perils. On the one hand it exaggerates the importance of the exterior things with which it is concerned, and on the other hand it diminishes the time and means which can be used for the general social good. That is, the elaboration of life implies impending materialism and selfishness, either of which is sufficient to destroy the soul.

Accordingly, the test by which to determine whether or not we are living the simple life is properly a subjective test. The simplicity of life does not consist in the fewness of the things which one possesses. A man whose income is five hundred dollars a year is not on that account living the simple life. Neither has the man who spends five thousand dollars a year forsaken it. The appearance of the parlor furniture is not a sure proof, neither is the number of courses at dinner a certain evidence, upon which to pronounce whether the simple

life or some other life is lived by the people of the house. There is no virtue in an artificial simplicity. There is no reason why the rich should behave as if they were poor. The question turns upon the effect which is produced upon us by our surroundings. Living as we do, what sort of persons are we? What kind of thoughts do we think? With what manner of occupation do we fill our time? What do we care for most? In what ways are we continually endeavoring to make the world about us happier? When the Second Adventist informed Mr. Emerson that the world was about to come to an end, Mr. Emerson answered, "I can get along very well without it." That is one of the formulas of the simple life. The heart of the matter is the spirit of detachment, whereby we make free use of all the pleasant things without being dependent upon them. St. Paul had that spirit, who said, "I know both how to be abased and how to abound; everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to be in want." He did not care. His supreme interests were quite apart from chances and changes such as these. Wealth and poverty—I mean decent poverty—are only forms of financial weather, hot and cold, or wet and dry, through

which the soul should pass, without serious attention, bent on other things.

Let us consider, then, as the new year begins, how we may best apply our income to the increase of our store of imperishable happiness. Let us spend our money for that which shall genuinely profit us and our neighbors, making us all better, contributing to the general joy of good living. Let us examine, for instance, the relation between what we spend upon ourselves and what we spend for others, and see if it is a right relation, such as may properly exist in an account which begins in the name of God.

I have spoken of accounts because the beginning of a new year brings such matters naturally to our attention. There is another volume, lying blank to-day, across whose first page we ought to set the inscription, In the Name of God. I mean the book of our appointments. One of the curious and significant differences between the past and the present is to be found in the fact that our grandparents kept journals, in which they wrote not only a record of events but their reflections upon contemporary life, while we keep very brief reminders in engagement books of the things which we intend to do. It illustrates our habit of hurrying on from one thing to

another, and our substitution of living for thinking.

Here, then, are the blank pages of these books. Suppose we review the appointments of last year, and see how large a proportion of the matters which we added to the routine of our days may be profitably continued into these new months. How much of it was worth while? What shall we subtract, what shall we add, to make this year a better year? A book like this represents our plans. The *routine* is that which must be done, whether we like it or not. There is no room here for good resolutions, except the determination to do all this more faithfully, more thoroughly and more cheerfully. Our new year's plans concern the added undertakings. To what shall we apply our minds this year, in addition to our daily tasks? Let us definitely settle with ourselves what subjects we shall study, what great book we shall read, what particular service we may render to our fellow men this year, in the name of God.

I have interpreted that great phrase as implying first the protection of God, and then the obedience of man. These two meanings meet when we begin to consider our sins. If we intend to write In the Name of God across the threshold of the new year, and to enter into

the future in that spirit, it is plain that we must amend our living. We must seek the divine protection not only against the assaults of pain but against the assaults of sin; and we must renew our resolution to obey God not only in our plans but in our common conduct. Let us not be of those who shall claim that they have lived in the name of God, only to find that they are unknown among His faithful servants. Let us beware lest taking His Holy Name in vain we fall under the inevitable condemnation. What we desire is to realize in our own experience the divine order of the Lord's Prayer, where we first pray, "Hallowed be Thy Name," and then, as fruit and consequence, proceed to pray, "Thy Kingdom come." The second waits upon the first. Wherever the Lord's name is hallowed, there the Lord's kingdom of righteousness and peace comes naturally.

We would be better. We would put behind us this and that besetting sin, which got the mastery over us so many times during the past year. Plainly, this is the season of new effort. This is the time to undertake a new campaign. This is the day in which to come with penitence to God, and with corresponding promises of better living. What do I need? Wherein do I offend? O God, therein

give me Thy prevailing help. For we are to remember that the first day of January is not adequately described when it is called the Festival of the Name of God. Any pagan can keep such a day as that. It is the Festival of the *Human* Name of God. On that day He in whom the Eternal God revealed Himself to us, was named. And they named Him Jesus; that is, Saviour. Because He came to save us from our sins. The apostles said that there was no other name under heaven given among men whereby we can be saved. They said that faith in His name would make the weakest strong, and illustrated it by setting a lame man on his feet and sending him into the temple leaping and praising God. That is what Christ does to-day for every lame soul, painfully hobbling along the hard ways of a bad world. Whoever puts his faith in Him, and takes Him for the Lord and Master of his life, is made strong, on the last day of an old year, or on the first day of a new year, or on any other day.

All this comes to expression in the text. It is a good prayer to learn by heart, and to make the word of the year. "Help us, O Lord our God, for we rest on Thee, and in Thy name we go against this multitude." This was the prayer and the creed of a king

in a day of battle. Asa went out to fight with Terah the Ethiopian at Mareshah. How long ago and far away it seems. "And Asa cried unto the Lord his God, and said, Lord, it is nothing with Thee to help whether with many, or with them that have no power; help us, O Lord our God; for we rest on Thee, and in Thy name we go against this multitude." Behold, it is our own battle, against pain and against sin. The multitude is the crowd of our impending failures, of our assaulting temptations, it is the assembly of all the obstructing difficulties of the year. Thus we stand confronting them. Thus we pray, taking that old prayer upon our lips, and repeating that old battle cry of faith and courage, "Help us, O Lord our God; for we rest in Thee, and in Thy name we go against this multitude."

WISE MEN AND PRIESTS AND SCRIBES

Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of Herod the King, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem.—*Matt.* 2 : 1.

THE wise men were unwelcome visitors. Jerusalem hated the east. Indeed, the Jews were not a friendly nation towards any of their neighbors. They were at enmity with all the points of the compass. Their earliest foe lived in the south, in Egypt. Herod, the king, whom they all properly detested, was set over them by their latest foe, from the west, whose capital was at Rome. But most of all they hated the east. Out of the lands which lay in that direction, had come first the army of Sargon and then the army of Nebuchadnezzar, and had destroyed their nation. These eastern folk had broken down the ancient kingdom of David and Solomon, past repair. As for the north, there was the great gate of the country. The land was defended by the sea on the west, and by the deep cleft of the river on the east; all armies from either of these parts of the world must take the northern road. Nobody knows whence the Epiphany wise men came,

nor by what way they traveled. We may freely guess, then, that they came along the old trodden thoroughfare out of the east, and through the northern gate. Anyhow, they were unwelcome. They represented regions and races which the Jews hated.

The bitterness of this hatred and the nature of it are shown in two curious writings of the Old Testament: in the book of Esther and in the book of Jonah.

The purpose of the book of Esther was to stir the old fires of race hatred. It is the worst book of the Bible. For even in the Bible there are good and bad. Some of these books are better than others; some are not so high in spirit nor so helpful to the reader; some might well have been omitted. For example, the Song of Solomon was written by Lord Byron, and Ecclesiastes was written by Colonel Ingersoll. I mean that the authors of these books were men of these two types and were actuated by the motives which these two names represent. The Song of Solomon is a love song, quite without reference to religion. And Ecclesiastes is the work of one to whom the voice of current religion was not the voice of truth. But Esther was written by Thomas of Torquemada, the general of the inquisition. That is, the book is filled with that fierce hatred which

finds occasional expression in the Psalms, as when the psalmist hopes to wash his footsteps in the blood of the ungodly and that the tongue of his dogs may be red through the same.

The King of Persia in the book of Esther is Ahasuerus, who is known in history as Xerxes, —the Xerxes who commanded the army of the east at the pass of Thermopylæ. Esther is his favorite queen, a Jewess; but the king does not know her race. Haman is a prince who quarrels with Esther's uncle, Mordecai, and in pursuit of his quarrel gets the king to issue an edict authorizing a general destruction of the Jews. The situation is one with which even the history of our own times has made us familiar. Esther, however, accuses Haman to the king, and gets him hanged on the high scaffold which he had made for Mordecai, and the king is persuaded to issue another edict authorizing the Jews to massacre the Persians. This edict goes into immediate effect, and on the first day the Jews kill five hundred gentiles in the palace alone. The king then asks Esther if she is not satisfied, and she begs that the massacre may be continued a day longer. On the second day, three hundred more are slain in the palace. Meanwhile, seventy-five thousand gentiles were put to death in the country at large.

This story was being read in the synagogue of Jerusalem when the wise men from the east knocked at the door. It shows the bitterness of the enmity with which the Jews regarded the gentiles.

The book of Jonah, on the other hand, is a protest against this bitter spirit, and was intended as a satire upon one of its prevailing motives. The root of bitterness grew not only in the soil of ancient strife, watered with the blood of old battles, but also in the soil of religion, enriched with ancient prejudices. It grew mainly out of a jealous love of God.

It says in the commandment that God is a jealous God. That was an attribute which appealed strongly to the Old Testament mind, for they were a jealous people. They desired to have God quite to themselves. "O God," they prayed, "Thou art my God,"—a good prayer, unless there is in the soul of the worshiper a feeling that God must not be at the same time his neighbor's God, in the same sense. God was their God, and the idea that God loved a gentile as much as He loved a Jew, the idea that God cared as much for wise men of the east as He did for priests and scribes was altogether incredible. They were as unwilling to believe it as a child would be unwilling to believe that his mother loved the

neighbor's children as much as she loved Him. God was the father of Israel; that was His house, His great house, roofed with the sky, but shut in between the desert and the mountains, and between the river and the sea.

Then somebody, who had a larger conception of God than that, wrote this story. Once upon a time, he said, God sent a prophet to preach to the people of Nineveh. "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it." But the prophet would not go. Indeed, the immediate act of Jonah was to make his way as fast as he could in exactly the other direction. Instead of starting for Nineveh, in the east, he started for Tarshish in the west. Now the ship in which he took his passage was manned by pagan sailors. The story begins with a strong contrast between Jonah and these gentiles. There was a great storm, and the sailors cried every man to his God, but Jonah was asleep. They waked him up to say his prayers, and found that the storm was occasioned by his presence. Even then they were most reluctant to put him overboard, and rowed hard, but in vain, to bring the boat to land. They prayed again, to Jonah's God, and cast the prophet into the sea, and feared the Lord greatly, and offered Him a sacrifice, and made vows.

Then Jonah went to Nineveh, as he was bidden, and preached his sermon,—"Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown." And all the people of Nineveh paid heed, and repented of their wickedness and turned to God, and the forty days came to an end and Nineveh was spared. But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was very angry. He reproached God, saying: "Did I not tell you so at the beginning? Did I not say that Thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness?" The gentiles of Nineveh had prayed to God, and God had heard their prayers. He had treated the citizens of Nineveh as if they had been citizens of Jerusalem. Jonah was very angry about it.

A great many people were in sympathy with Jonah. They were conscientiously opposed to foreign missions, because they were afraid that the foreign missions would be successful, and that in consequence God would love foreigners.

Then came the Epiphany, and Christ was manifested to the gentiles. That was the true beginning of the Christian religion. Christianity, as a distinctive force in the world, is to be dated not from the nativity, and not from the circumcision, but from the visit of the wise men. For these events are significant

not so much in the world of historical fact as in the world of spiritual symbol. At the nativity, God revealed Himself in human flesh —a great event, greatest of all events, but waiting for interpretation. God has indeed come, but for whom? On the eighth day, being circumcised according to the law, He was made a member of the Jewish Church. Is that the answer to the question? God has come for the Jews. God, made manifest in man, is born in a Jewish family, and without hesitation joins the Jewish Church. He disappears in the institution. The light shone in the universal sky on the night of His birth, and we hoped that He had come for the sake of the whole world, even to save us gentiles. But no; immediately they send for the priest, and the priest goes in, closing the door behind him, leaving us all outside.

But look, as we stand shivering without, who are these at the head of the street, coming down our way? They ride on camels, and have treasures in their hands, and show the signs of a long journey. They are all of them gentiles, wise men from the east, not a Jew among them. See, they stop before the house into which the priest entered; they open the door and go in and we go in with them, being kinsfolk of theirs, and thus we all kneel

down together in that blessed presence, and it is revealed to us that the Lord is our Lord also. Yes, He joined the Jewish church, but that was only a symbol of His wish that all men everywhere should enter into the institutions of the spiritual life by the nearest door. The circumcision suggests the sacrament of baptism, but the Epiphany suggests the sacrament of the holy communion. And who are these communicants, partaking of the benediction of His presence? Kneeling in love and veneration, offering Him their gifts; who are these first of all the Christian communicants? Thank God, they are pagans; they are gentiles; they represent humanity not on its ecclesiastical but on its natural side. They are the men whom Esther hated, and at whose salvation Jonah was displeased exceedingly. The whole world comes in with them: nobody is left out.

Thus it is by the Epiphany that Christmas is given its distinctive Christian interpretation. It is here revealed that Christianity is a universal religion, independent of all priests and scribes.

Naturally, the priests and scribes objected. So did most of the church people.

The emphasis of the priest is on the church. He magnifies the church. Occupied as he is with matters ecclesiastical, busy with the or-

ganization and administration of religion, devoted to the progress of the institution, planning for it night and day, standing or falling with its success or failure, he thinks not only that the church is the most important society on earth but that God in heaven is of the same opinion. God cares for the church. His grace is in the church; whoever wants it must come here to get it. They who belong to the church are the children of God; others are His children also, but only in the sense in which cats and dogs and all living creatures are members of His family. Outside the church there is small chance of salvation; though possibly some of the better heathen, being at such a far distance from church privileges, may be forgiven by reason of their ignorance. God is in the church as the fire is on the hearth, where the room is warm while outside the wind blows cold.

That was the assured conviction of every priest who met the wise men on their way to Bethlehem. That was the church idea of that time.

You remember what happened in the course of the first Christian sermon. I suppose that we may call the discourse of our Lord at Nazareth in the synagogue the first Christian sermon. There He said, as He preached, that

Elijah fed a heathen widow, and that Elisha healed a heathen soldier, implying that these were excellent examples. Thereupon the whole congregation rose up and seized the preacher and put Him out of the synagogue, intending to throw Him over the side of the hill.

You remember what happened to put an end to the sermon which St. Paul preached in Jerusalem on the stairs of the castle. There had been a riot in the temple court, in which the apostle had been beaten, and out of which he had been rescued none too soon by the garrison of the castle. The riot was caused by a rumor that Paul, whose friendship with gentiles was a matter of common scandal among church people, had brought the gentiles into the temple itself. When they heard that, they determined to kill him, and were engaged in that enterprise when the guard came. At the top of the stairs, Paul stopped and spoke. Master as he was of the art of speech, he compelled attention. So they listened, until at last he uttered the word gentiles. Then at that word, they cried out all together, and cast off their coats as men about to fight, and threw dust into the air, finding no stones at hand, shouting, "Away with such a fellow from the earth."

These were protests of the people, in the spirit of the priests, against the epiphany idea of the universality of religion. And the time came, as we all know, when the protests of the priests and of the people prevailed. They had their way in the middle ages. The splendid, free, universal religion of the spirit was brought back into the old bondage to the institution. Men said the same things about the Christian Church, which had been said before about the Jewish Church. They went back into the idea of God which was applauded in the book of Esther, and satirized in the book of Jonah. They believed again that God was in the church, and nowhere else. They rejoiced in the monopoly of God. They kept the festival of the wise men, but if an actual wise man of the east had presented himself at the altar of the church, he would have been turned away. Indeed, the wise men of the west found little hospitality there.

The priests had their dominion in the middle ages. Then came the scribes.

The emphasis of the scribe is on the book. He magnifies the book. All the day long is his study in it, great treasures of spiritual wisdom does he find in it for himself and for all other men, the heavens are open as he turns the pages, and, like the priest, he comes

to think that the Bible is the greatest book, and then the only book, not only on the earth but in the sky. God, he says, is in this book, and in none other. When the wise men came asking their eager question, "Where is He that is born King of the Jews?" The matter was referred to the king as being likely to know about kings; and he referred it to the scribes; and the scribes referred it to the book. All that was worth knowing was in the book. There, indeed, they found the answer.

It is true that when they had read the answer, they shut the book and went back to their homes. The wise men made their way alone from Jerusalem to Bethlehem. Not a scribe was with them. Of course, there is a good meaning of the word scribe, and there is a good meaning of the word priest. But when we speak of a scribe in the bad sense, we mean just that kind of man: the man who opens the book, and finds the truth, and then shuts it and does nothing. Thus our Lord said of the scribes that they had the keys of the kingdom of heaven—every great book unlocks one of the doors of the kingdom of heaven—but that they neither went in themselves nor did they let anybody else in.

These were the scribes, then, the men of the sacred book. They said that God spent His

days and nights, as they did, in the study of the book. It was God's book. He wrote it, and was in it. And He had written nothing else. They viewed with the heaviest displeasure the reading of Greek authors. They carefully counted all the words of the book, and then all the letters. Their business was to recite the book, and to hear the recitations of their pupils.

Then our Lord came and treated the book with a freedom which took away their breath. He said that there were mistakes in it, and that those mistakes had to do not with matters of geology or of history, for which it would have been easy to find an explanation, but with matters of morals. He criticised even the Ten Commandments, which the scribes said had been written by the finger of God in heaven, saying that they did not go far enough, and proceeding to show how far they ought to go. He said that Elijah, who called down fire from heaven on his enemies, was no fit example for a Christian man.

The first Christian martyr was stoned to death for the offense of speaking disrespectfully, so they said, about the Bible. That was their continual contention with St. Paul. He criticised the Bible, saying that a good deal of it was now obsolete, and must be given up.

He had no use for the book of Leviticus, which was the Bible sanction for all the sacraments and for the order of the sacred ministry. He assembled a church council at Jerusalem to debate the most important question which was ever discussed by a general convention: Shall we obey the Bible or not? that is, for example, with regard to circumcision. They decided that they would not obey the Bible. They would do whatever seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to themselves. It was the formula of a thousand revolutions, and it struck the scribes with palsy.

But the scribes, like the priests, had their day in spite of these beginnings. They rose up at the Reformation, putting the infallible Bible in the place of the infallible church, and saying all the old things over again. They exceeded all their predecessors. The original Hebrew of the Old Testament had consisted only of consonants. The Jews supplied the vowels as they went along. At the beginning of the Middle Ages certain Jewish rabbis wrote the vowels in. This they did to the best of their ability, using whatever scholarship they had. This made the text of the Bible which was in the hands of the new scribes. And because their theory demanded a Bible without error, they maintained that

even these vowels were inspired by God. They separated the Bible from all other books, finding the divine voice there, and there alone.

Wise men came, asking questions, as is the manner of wise men, and the scribes declined to answer them. Indeed, they could not answer them. They fell back into the position of the adversaries of St. Stephen and St. Paul. Paul and Stephen came again, reading the Bible in the old free way, intent on finding out the truth about it and the truth in it, by the aid of the ever-present Holy Spirit, and the scribes cried out that they were irreverent and unbelieving persons, having no faith in the supernatural, enemies of the faith. The time for casting stones having now gone by, they threw books at them, heavy with solid words.

The new scribes, like the new priests, were conscientious and religious persons. They were men of God. That we know by our own acquaintance with them. For this is a matter of contemporary history. The man of the church and the man of the book are still our neighbors. Yes, I hope that we ourselves are men of the church and of the book, but not in the priest-and-scribe way. The priest says, God is only in the church; the wise men, seeing the star shining over Nineveh and Baby-

lon,—and somehow losing sight of it within the walls of Jerusalem,—declare that God is blessedly present wherever any two or three are met for any earnest purpose in His name. The scribe says, God is only in the book; the wise men, reading as they run in the wide page of the sky, declare that God is in all the books wherein the soul of man perceives His presence and finds His blessing, and outside of all the books in the revelation of the universal world.

God is present in all life. They are in error who imagine that He is confined within the walls of any sacred city. That is the message which the Epiphany wise men bring with them out of the East.

FAITH AND SALVATION

He that believeth not shall be damned.—*Mark* 16 : 16.

It is an old-fashioned text, which has been long disused. It was formerly expounded frequently, and the exposition scared the congregation. I have not selected it, however, for that purpose.

When these words were pronounced by Jonathan Edwards in his pulpit at Northampton, and enforced by illustrations which he drew not from Scripture nor from observation, but from visions such as Dante saw when he made the pilgrimage of hell, his hearers involuntarily braced their feet against the church floor to keep from sliding into the bottomless pit. There it lay open between the pulpit and the front pew. They felt its poisonous flame hot in their faces. The meeting-house reeked with sulphur. So it was with a thousand other congregations of that time. Indeed, throughout a great part of Christian history, men have been accustomed to find in this text a message of the terror of the Lord. They have been dreadfully afraid of being damned.

Moreover, many persons who felt reasonably certain that they themselves would be saved, have inferred from these words the everlasting damnation of their neighbors. The sentence is a heap of convenient stones. In every generation, controversialists have resorted to it for ammunition. It is a quarry of curses. This, also, is now for the most part of the past. We may not go so far as to say that the quarry is abandoned, but it is not worked as it used to be. Moss is beginning to gather on the rocks.

I do not intend to discuss the significance of this change. The change itself is plain enough. Our day differs from that of our forefathers so much that we may be said to have, in some respects, a different religion, for better and for worse. People seem to have lost all fear of going to hell. But that is a mistaken and delusive assurance. Whatever we may think concerning either the nature or the duration of future punishment, the fact of it, the moral and logical and divine necessity of it, is as plain and inevitable as ever. Our modern knowledge does but confirm the truth of the great saying, "Be not deceived; God is not mocked; whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

Nevertheless, as regards this present text,

there is a certain abatement to be made. The sentence is not in the Bible. It is written, indeed, at the end of the Gospel of St. Mark, but nobody knows who wrote the concluding verses of that gospel, except that they were not written by the author of the gospel. They are not found in the best manuscripts. Moreover, even if the text did have a safe place in the Bible, that dignity would belong to the Greek original, not to the English version: for the English words in which it is stated do not adequately translate the Greek. In the Revised New Testament,—where the conclusion of scholars are put into the possession of busy people,—the error is corrected, and the text reads, "He that disbelieveth shall be condemned." This, you see, is quite a different matter: the act is different, and the punishment is different. He that "believeth not" may be in an innocent state of ignorance or of misunderstanding; he that "disbelieveth" stands in the presence of the truth and refuses to give it his allegiance. As for the penalty of disbelief, the change of words follows a change of meaning. To us at present, the word damnation has reference to everlasting punishment. In the days of the translators who worked under the patronage of King James, the word was not so strong. It meant

then only what we mean now by condemnation,—that is, serious disapproval.

This, therefore, is the sentence to which I ask your attention: He that disbelieveth shall be condemned.

There is one ambition in which we all agree. There is one thing which we all desire. There is one great word which sums up all our hopes. That word is success. These seven letters cover the details of the ideals of the man whose week begins on Sunday and of the man whose very different week begins on Monday. The word success signifies that splendid accomplishment whereby a man makes the most of himself, and contributes something of abiding value to the community in which he lives. And this old Book, the Bible, which was the wisest book in the world before men began to count the years according to our present calendar, and whose wisdom is abundantly confirmed by nineteen centuries of human experience,—this book says that disbelief spells failure. In another place it declares that without faith it is impossible to please God. And since to please God means to be in efficient harmony with the universe and with humanity, failure to please God means general disaster. The approbation of God is the Bible phrase for the fulfilment of one's life, the attainment

of one's hopes, the realization of one's ideals. It signifies that which every good man longs for as he looks out into the world. It is the same thing as the supreme success. And the condition of it, the essential requisite to its possession, is faith. Another Bible synonym for success is salvation. The word has been narrowly applied to the escape of the sinner from the everlasting penalties of sin. But that is not its proper definition. To be saved is to be safe and sound, not in the next world only but immediately and especially now, in this present life. It is to be in a good condition of physical, intellectual, moral and spiritual health. The text declares that faith,—that is a right relation to truth,—is essential to salvation,—that is to the blessing of sound health, the health of the whole man.

Faith is therefore exalted by the Christian religion into a place of essential importance. We cannot succeed without it. He who aspires to mastery must take faith into the plan of his life. But what is faith?

Is it intellectual submission? Yes, in some measure. This, at least, has been proved true by manifold experience, that to take the word of Jesus Christ as the substantial ground of certainty in religion is to do that which is both reasonable and satisfying—satisfying to most

persons. What I mean is this: There are a few fundamental questions which everybody must answer. They are forced upon us by the facts of life, and the answer which we give goes far to determine our attitude towards life, and to decide whether we shall be glad or sad, hopeful or dejected, strong or weak, cowards or heroes, saints or sinners. These questions have reference to the being and nature and will of God, to the sense of duty, to the significance of pain, to the worth and dignity of life, whether it ends at death or goes on into larger opportunity. In the presence of such questions the thing to do, when we have followed our own thoughts into perplexity, and have come upon a wall without a door, is to say, Jesus Christ knows a thousand times more about these deep things than I can ever know, and I will simply take His word in the region of the spiritual as I am accustomed to take the word of the scientific masters in the range of the material. That is the best possible procedure for all people who are engaged in the exacting business of the world's affairs. I would not recommend it to a student of philosophy, for he is engaged in the discovery of truth for himself and us. But there are not many students of philosophy, and still fewer philosophers, even in college.

This, however, is not the whole context of faith. Faith means much more than the passive reception of truth even at the hands of the supreme authority. Christ was all the time teaching His disciples to think, and compelling them to think; asking them questions to find out what they thought, and answering their questions in such enigmatical fashion that they had to use their minds in order to understand His meaning. One reason why He went away at last out of their sight was that they might thereby be enabled to think freely. He knew that it was not good for them to live in the near neighborhood of infallibility.

Is faith to be defined, then, as intellectual apprehension? Yes, in part. Into all vital faith, into all saving faith, enters the reason. It is by the reason that we lay hold upon the significance of the truth which we recite with our lips. It is not ours; it does not enter into our life; it does not contribute to the health of our soul, until it is received and examined and accepted and appreciated by our mind.

It is evident, however, that intellectual apprehension enters into faith only as it does into life,—that is, partially, and not essentially. Our vital relation to things material does not depend on our technical understanding. We get much honest pleasure from works of art

without being able to speak the dialect of artists. We do not need to be astronomers in order to enjoy the stars, nor geologists in order to perceive the glory of the hills. Our ordinary use of the telephone and the electric light does not depend on any knowledge of the difference between a volt and a dynamo. It is likely that if we knew these matters with more accuracy we might find life more interesting; but ignorant as we are, we still account the world a pleasant residence. Neither does our vital relation to things spiritual depend upon any technical understanding. If it did, only examining chaplains, professors in theological seminaries and a few doctors of divinity would go to heaven.

But if faith is neither submission nor apprehension, what is it? What is faith? Faith is described in the Epistle to the Hebrews in two familiar phrases. It is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things unseen.

I will examine the second of these descriptive phrases first: faith is the evidence of things unseen. That is, faith is that which makes the unseen evident. It makes the invisible visible. Faith, in this sense, is spiritual sight. Physical sight is the mere reflection of an object upon the retina of the eye: it is a gift which we have in common with looking-

glasses and puddles of still water. Mental sight is had when the mind looks through the eye; in the case of spiritual sight, it is the soul which looks through. Faith is a sixth sense. It is the perception of an environment of which the other senses take no account. One time a prophet and his servant were hard beset in a hostile country, and the servant's heart failed him. Then the prophet cried, "O Lord, open this young man's eyes." And behold, upon the mountains round about, a shining army, the celestial soldiers of the Lord of Hosts, waiting the word of battle. The prophet had seen them all along, while to the dull eye of the servant nothing had been visible but rocks and trees. It is an illustration of the new sight of faith, the evidence of things unseen. Anybody can see hills and stars, but they who have the gift of faith see God among the hills and stars. Anybody can say prayers, but to the men and women who pray in faith, God appears attending to their prayers and answering them.

Or let us approach it in this manner: ten children are standing at the corner of the street, and a man comes in sight. Nine children say silently and instinctively, "There is a man"; and that is the whole content of their thought. The tenth child says, "There is my

father," and runs to meet him. The man of faith looks into the world about him, and into the experiences which enter into his life, and says, "There is my father." He looks into the face of Jesus Christ, and says, "There is my brother."

The meaning of faith has been obscured by confusing it with the faith. The two are quite different. Faith is a matter of emotion; it means a personal relationship with God. The faith is a matter of intelligence; it means religious truth definitely stated. That is, faith is like a love of flowers, while the faith is like a book of botany. Faith is like the joy of reading, while the faith is like a treatise on rhetoric or grammar. Faith is like filial affection; the faith is like filial understanding. What I mean is this; a child stands at your knee as you write a letter. His affection for you is akin to faith; his dim idea as to what you are about, his childish conception of your occupation and your interests, is like the faith.

It is faith which is set forth in the New Testament as essential to salvation, not the faith. The woman of Sidon, to whom the Lord said, "Great is thy faith," was a pagan. Christ praised not her theological accuracy but her recognition of Himself and her confidence in Him. There He went along the street, the

supreme man, hero of heroes, saint of saints, God in human flesh; and most of the citizens passed Him by without a glance. But she knew Him, and He blessed her. This is one of many ways in which faith is the secret of success. As we go on in life, we will find our fortunes decided day by day by our ability to know a good man when we see him. Shall it be success or failure? It depends upon the masters whom we choose, the leaders whom we follow, the friends whose ideals shape our own, the partners in our undertakings. And these we select wisely or unwisely, for our good or for our ill, according to the proportion of faith. What we need is the evidence of things unseen, a sight which goes below the surface and discerns the thoughts and intentions of the heart. We need to see men as they are. The Master and the twelve pass by in the street, and our whole future depends upon our ability to perceive which one is Judas, and which one is Jesus. To recognize Jesus Christ as the ultimate standard of all that is best, to measure men by Him, to determine the alternatives of life by the test of His approval, daily to live close to Him,—this is faith; this is success.

Thus we come to the other descriptive phrase: faith is the substance of things hoped for. That is, faith is not only a personal rela-

tionship with God, whereby we perceive Him though He is unseen; faith is also an inference from that relationship and a state of mind resulting from that inference. Suppose that the nine children on the corner are abusing the tenth. The soul of the tenth child is filled with distress. Then he sees his father, and immediately, before anything happens, his distress disappears. The mere sight of his father changes the whole situation. Faith is a sight of the eternal Father in the midst of the trials and perplexities of life. That sight strengthens the soul, and changes the whole face of experience. The peace and joy which we hope for become at once a substantial reality.

For we ourselves determine the quality of our life. It is actually what we make it. And the Christian name of our determining act is faith. The eyes of youth see the bright side of the world, and success seems the logical, almost the inevitable result of strength and ability and energy and courage. But the multiplying years bring temptation and disappointment. The days pass in procession "like barefoot Dervishes," carrying priceless gifts, and we who behold the pomp have at last in our hands only "a few herbs and apples." That is what the golden dream amounts to, that is the disillusion into which we come as we go on. Blessed

be such disillusion if thereby the truth comes into clear sight. Blessed be such disillusion if thereby we learn that the homely apples of our own orchards are sweeter to the taste than all the glittering fruit of the Hesperides. Then we realize that success depends not on any outward circumstances but on the serenity of the soul. Success is a personal quality, not a material possession. It is an attitude towards life. The heart of it is that faith in God which keeps man in accord with the world visible and invisible. "The event itself," says Maeterlinck, "is pure water that flows from the pitcher of fate, and seldom has it either savor or perfume or color. But even as the soul may be wherein it seeks shelter, so will the event become joyous or sad, become tender or hateful, become deadly or quick with life." And the words of Marcus Aurelius follow, like the prayer after the sermon, "Everything is harmonious with me which is harmonious with thee, O universe. Nothing is too early or too late, which is in due time for thee." And Henley's verse comes in, like the hymn after the prayer,

> "It matters not how strait the gate,
> How charged with punishments the scroll,
> I am the master of my fate;
> I am the captain of my soul."

You know people who go on over hard roads with amazing serenity. Life is full of bitterness for them, but all the bitter experience is somehow sweetened. Loss and disappointment do not affect them as they do others. Even in the face of the direst of ills, they are composed and confident. They meet disaster with celestial cheerfulness. Thus they go along the difficult way, and do not falter nor grow weary. How do they do it? What is the secret of it? The secret of it is that by faith they see God; as they go, they walk with God, holding the hand of God.

This is plainly the supreme good. This is the substance of what a man may wisely hope for. This is success, though all the circumstances threaten failure. To stand unharmed and undismayed amidst the changes and chances of this mortal life; to possess one's soul in perfect peace; to conquer, come what may,—where is any fame or gain, or any other gift which can compare with this? They who are of this mind are saved; that is, they are spiritually sound and well. And they are saved by virtue of their unfailing harmony with that invisible environment of the divine presence which they see with the eyes of faith.

He that believeth not is condemned already, because he believeth not. He walks abroad in

a world which speaks to him of many things, but not of God; as a blind man makes his uncertain way around the corners of a world which speaks to him of many things, but not of light. And in the midst of the discouragements, the mischances, the perplexities, the hard pains, the inevitable distresses which beset the days of the sons of men, he stands forlorn and comfortless, shivering, alone, without God in the world.

Then he knows, and we know who look on, that faith is the most precious thing in life. It saves men now and here, so that we see it with our eyes. He who lacks it perishes day by day, in the impoverishment of his life, in the hopelessness of his pain, in the blank despair of his grief, in the foreboding with which he faces the future. Heaven help him! He belongs to the defective classes: he has no eyes in his soul.

E. C. P. 1913

HOPE AND PROGRESS

"Beloved, now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And every man that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself even as He is pure."—1 *John* 3 : 2, 3.

HERE is set forth the foundation and the object and the effect of hope. Hope must have foundation. It must rest upon the solid ground of assurance. Otherwise it serves but to distract and delude us. It is of this idle hope that Sir Arthur Helps is thinking when he says, "The men who hope little are the men who go on working." The men who dream little, who do the duty next them, instead of fancying what they would do if some great and remote duty were given them, go on working. False hope hinders work, but not true hope. The men who have little hope, little, honest and worthy and well-founded hope, are just the men who will not and cannot go on working long.

The moment when it is realized by any considerable company of people that they must always be exactly as they are, and their children after them, always poor, always enslaved,

always under the hard hand of the taskmaster, that moment the institutions of the nation in which these people live will come to the test.

We have been taught of late that no power on earth keeps great crowds of men from open rebellion against the hard conditions of their lives except the influence of religion. They are promised that, after the troubles of this bad world are over, there will be another and a better life. They are sustained by hope. It must, indeed, be noted that hard work and poverty invite materialism; so that men fail presently to see any longer the vision of the celestial country; and also that religion to-day is not saying so much as once it did about the life to come. It is believed in with devout assurance, but it is felt that the great work of religion is to save men here and now; it is taught that conditions which leave no hope except in a remote heaven must not be permitted to go on. Thus on both sides, on the side of doubt and on the side of faith, emphasis is laid upon this present life. Men are asking: What hope have I for a better day to-morrow? And other men are realizing that they who have no hope are a peril to our contented peace.

We must have hope. The condition of happiness is joyous movement from the imperfect

towards the perfect. Even in heaven there must be always something better to expect. The inhabitants of the perfect star, in Browning's poem, where everything was right and everybody was good, where the sun shone every day, and there were no labors and no troubles, discovered by some chance that in a neighboring planet there was imperfection, so that to-morrow instead of being like to-day might be better still, and they wanted to go there, to get out of the monotony of perfection into a realm of hope.

St. John tells us that we have a good reason for our hope. We may expect to be better than we are; we may expect, in spite of our manifold negligence and ignorance, to grow in grace and in the knowledge and the love of God; because we are the sons of God. Even now are we the children of God. "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God." That is what the Christian religion teaches. Our sins are offenses against a Father —not against a hard taskmaster, who is ever watching the race with anxious and angry eyes to spy out our transgressions and to measure out our punishments, but against our Father, who loves each one of us, and is grieved at our offenses, and sorrows over our

shortcomings, who asks our love in return, who would have us behave towards Him lovingly, trustfully and obediently as children, who desires the salvation and happiness now and forever, of every one of us. God is our Father. That is the foundation of our hope.

Hope must have an object. We must not only have a reason for being hopeful, but we must have something definite to hope for. "It doth not yet appear," says St. John, "what we shall be." We may set that down as the end of profitable speculation. We do not know yet, nor can we know, the blessings of the future. We can frame no adequate conception of the conditions under which life will go on after death. Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man the blessings which God hath prepared for those who love Him.

All the descriptions of the other world—the pearly gates, the golden streets, the many mansions, the white robes, the harps and crowns and palms—none of these are realities. They are only symbols. They shadow forth in a faint way to our imperfect understanding the glory and the joy of the beatific vision, and of the conscious and abiding presence of the Heavenly Father. In such words God speaks, to us, as He must needs speak, as to children.

We could not understand if He were to tell us. The words out of which the sentences of revelation should be constructed are not in our dictionaries. Human speech stammers when it undertakes to voice even our dim conception of that blessed hope. "It doth not yet appear."

Here, however, is something which does appear. Here is something that we know. People say sometimes that we know nothing about the other world, and that in regard to that undiscovered country silence is fittest. That is true and not true. Here, at least, is something that St. John knew. "We know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." This is the object of hope. Towards this we look. The sight of Him, and the transformation of ourselves into His likeness—this we hope for. To see Him whom our soul desires, to behold Him who for our sake gave up His life, that will be our joy and our crown.

Here we see through a glass darkly; we seem to lose sight of the divine face, the thick cloud of our transgressions hangs between us and Him; our prayers are cold, our aspirations weak, even our faith sometimes seems to fail, and love grows faint, and hope is near to losing hold; we see Him far away, the sins, the

troubles, the distractions of our lives between us and Him; but we shall behold Him face to face; we shall look upon the King in His beauty; we shall see Him "as He is."

Here we are so sadly unlike Him, so grievously un-Christlike, stained and marred with mean and unworthy thoughts; full of purposes half-formed and rarely so much as half performed; our ideals low enough, but our lives a long way below our ideals; have no peace, except a false peace won by surrender; but there the struggle ended, the battle finished, peace attained.

We shall be like Him because we shall live every day in that blessed life in His own presence. It is true that if our town should be suddenly taken up into heaven, heaven would be very much like the present place. Some people would be content to have it so; but they are the privileged folk; the people in the tenements would not say that. Yes, heaven would be very much like our town, provided that all the temptation and distraction came along with it. But suppose that the town is taken up into heaven, and that every man, woman and child comes into a new relation towards Jesus Christ, so that they all know Him. The mills and the shops and the markets are all gone; there are no hours of labor, no wages and no bills; worry

has been abolished out of life; all has passed away that claimed so much of the time and thought of many people that they had no space for looking up into God's sky; every man and woman and child is in a place which is perfectly clean, and perfectly governed, where there is opportunity and leisure to rest after this weary and anxious and hurried life, and where everybody has a chance. Would it be just the same town?

We know very well what our surroundings do for us, and how our friends who are wiser and better than we are help us. What, then, may not come into our imperfect and unworthy lives when we shall see Christ "as He is." The shadows pass away which mistaken doctrines have cast about Him; the curtains fall away behind which skepticism and superstition have alike hidden Him, and there is Jesus Christ, the real, true Lord and Master of us "as He is." Of course, we will grow "like Him." How could we help it?

The foundation of hope is the fatherhood of God; the object of hope is the vision of Christ, when we shall ourselves be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. Then St. John teaches us the effect of hope. "Every man that hath this hope in Him"—in his heart, not merely in his Bible or his prayer-book, not

only upon his tongue when he recites the creed, not in his mind only, as an unconsidered matter which his fathers have told him and which his brethren confess, but which is not really his because it is not a part of him, is not "in" him—every man that hath this hope and blessed assurance in him does something, cannot refrain from doing something, "purifies himself," and this not after a low standard, being content to be pure even as his neighbors are pure, but "even as He is pure."

So that, as hope is the inspiration to good living, good living is the proof and test of hope. Whoever has this hope in him is daily purifying himself, daily fighting down all that is unworthy in him, daily gaining a little space towards his great ideal. Whoever is not so purifying himself, but is content instead to live an easy, careless life, in which religion has no great part; or who, while professing a regard for religion, and being numbered—so far as the register of names goes—among the declared followers of Jesus Christ, is so acting and so appearing as to be manifestly unworthy of the ideal which he claims to set before him; he who so sets his practice to contradict his profession, is depending upon some other hope than that which St. John speaks of. It is not "this hope," but some

deceptive and misleading hope. For whosoever hath this hope in him purifieth himself.

That is a deceptive and misleading hope which permits a man to postpone amendment of his life under the persuasion that everything will come out all right somehow in the end. There is a hope under whose evil counsel one who understands all that the Christian religion has to say about the certainty of judgment, the inevitability of consequences in the spiritual as well as in the physical world, and the absolute dependence of the next life upon this, may yet go on living unworthily and carelessly. Some time I will repent, says such a one; some time I will amend my life and try to be a better Christian; some time I will put away the sin in which I now persist, but there is no hurry.

In the fable, the devil calls the evil spirits together in conference over the assault which they would make upon the soul of man. One says, I will go and tell men that there is no God; another says, I will teach them that the Bible is a lie; but Satan himself gives the best advice, for he says and persuades men that there is no hurry!

A right hope is strength and inspiration. God, our loving Father, in His tender mercy, calls us, invites, urges us, holds out the hand

of hope to us, helps us as much as we will let Him. God has made ready in the life to come a blessed place for every one of us. "In My Father's home are many mansions, and I go to prepare a place for you." He gives us our free choice; He permits us, if we will, to spend our life in making ourselves unfit for His presence; but in His great love and longing for our love, here He holds out this blessed hope, that we may be led to prepare ourselves for the place prepared for us. That by His help we may purify ourselves that we may enter in where only the pure may dwell, and may see Him whom only the pure may see.

III C.O.P. 1913

THE QUALITY OF CHARITY

But the greatest of these is charity.—1 Cor. 13: 13.

THE charity which is at the heart of all right ministration to the poor, St. Paul considers in the half of a sentence: "Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing." The words are of such everlasting importance that they have given philanthropy a new name from that day to this. The fact that philanthropy has not always lived up to this good name has brought the name itself into some disrepute. People resent being made the recipients of "charity." It suggests condescension and social distance, and that kind of pity which irritates rather than comforts. The association or the organization of the charities of a community, a wise and beneficial, even an indispensable, arrangement, suggests a way of being brotherly by proxy or by machinery, a substitution of science for friendship, and of investigation for fraternity.

That is, between the common notion of charity and the sense in which St. Paul used the word, there is an antagonistic difference.

It is plain that we need to fill our charities with the spirit of charity. All this great subject, however, St. Paul touches in but half a sentence. The charity which he is exalting in this splendid hymn is only incidentally that which is manifested in the dispensing of alms.

A similar place is given in this high discourse to the charity which is at the heart of all right self-sacrifice. It is considered in the other half of the same sentence, "Though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing." This is the way in which all the penances of Lent are to be sanctified. They may be of no value whatsoever. They may be fulfilled with all diligence, with the observance of every scruple; people may attend church every day in Lent, and fast six times in the week, and deny themselves the joys of life; and yet it may all profit them nothing.

It is very likely, by reason of this warning, that the chapter on charity was chosen to be read, as we have read it to-day, upon the threshold of Lent. It calls our attention to the fact that the helpfulness of Lent depends wholly upon the spirit in which it is kept. The outward act, though it be one of the extremest self-denial and devotion, is interpreted to God by the motive which is be-

hind it. To take the instance which is used by St. Paul, people have actually suffered martyrdom. They have been burned at the stake, and yet have been disapproved by God. All their pain has profited them nothing.

This, however, is an aspect of the matter which St. Paul passes over with only this incidental mention. He is intent upon something else. For the charity which is the heart of all right philanthropy and for the charity which is at the heart of all right penitential action, he has but these two halves of the same sentence. The charity with which he chiefly deals is that which sanctifies all right speech. He is thinking of the words which men say, and of the spirit to which those words give expression and of which they are the revelation. The grace which he is glorifying is the grace of charitable utterance.

The particular kind of speech which St. Paul has immediately in mind here is ecclesiastical speech: that is, he is thinking of the things that are said in church and in connection with the church. In the parish of Corinth at the time when this epistle was written, a great many people were saying a great many things. The impression of the customary Christian service in Corinth which we get from St. Paul's reference to it is one of much confusion.

Everybody in the congregation seems to be talking. "When ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation." The apostle tells them bluntly that any stranger looking in at the door and hearing this extraordinary noise would think that they were all crazy. Gradually, some order was introduced into this chorus of voices, but even then the best that could be done was to order that not more than two, "or at the most three," should speak at once. There was plainly among the Corinthians an uncommon eagerness to speak in public upon matters of religion. St. Paul encourages it: he would have them all take part in exhortation, in instruction, in administration. "Covet earnestly the best gifts." "And yet," he adds, "show I unto you a more excellent way." Then comes the chapter on charity.

"Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy (or, as we would say, of preaching) and understand all mysteries and all knowledge: and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing."

It makes one think of that other hard say-

ing, in the sermon on the Mount, where our Lord declares that among the rejected at the last day will be some who will claim the privileges of His personal friendship and the rewards of successful service. They will tell how they have preached in the name of Jesus, and in His name have done great deeds for humanity. And He will look at them, and say "I never knew you."

That is, it is possible to discourse with enthusiasm and skill and effectiveness upon themes connected with religion and yet not be in a true sense religious. It is possible to be a Christian minister without being a Christian. The fact that one is greatly interested as the Corinthians were in the progress of the church may mean much or nothing. It is plain that a considerable number of the delegates to the early councils of the church were not Christians. They were bishops, but not Christians. For they did not behave like Christians. It is plain that a great deal of controversial writing, past and present, and upon all sides of all questions, was written by men who, whatever they may have been, were not Christians. They may have edited Christian papers, they may have preached in Christian pulpits and officiated at Christian altars, they may have professed to believe the Christian creed, they may indeed have honestly

believed themselves to be doing a service to the Christian church, but they lacked the essential quality which makes speech Christian, the quality of charity. If it was out of the abundance of their heart that their mouth spake, what they said revealed a heathen heart. They were actual pagans who had adopted some of the phases and externals of the Christian religion. Or, if that is too much to say, this at least is true, that in spite of all their eloquence, their knowledge and their zeal, they were become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal.

All this uncharitable controversy,—and unchristian because uncharitable,—shows how true Christianity is to the facts of human nature. For the purpose of controversy is to convince. That is the intention with which all intelligent and earnest persons enter into it. But how is conviction to be attained? How shall we set about this necessary task of showing their errors to those who are in error, in such a clear way that they shall turn to the truth? The controversialist says, "I will convince my brother by abusing him. I will take it for granted that he is a dishonest or at the best a very dull person, and I will disclose his dishonesty or his dumbness to the sight of all the neighbors." This is controversy without

charity. Nothing could be more foolishly futile. No approach to a man could be more certain to fail of convincing him. The effort of such an argument, though the controversialists were doubly and trebly in the right, is simply to confirm a man in his previous opinion. The thing has been tried again and again, in all eras of religious history, and has never succeeded since the world began. It is impossible that it should ever succeed. It contradicts the elemental instincts of human nature.

See now what charity does. St. Paul makes it perfectly plain. "Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things."

This is a catalogue of the qualities of charity. These are the virtues which will enter into any true description of the grace of charity. They presuppose the fact of difference. They are awakened in the Christian soul by the presence of disagreement. Here is one whose position or opinion is other than our own. It becomes necessary for us to speak

to him, or about him, in regard to the matter in which we are at variance. He is of another sort of churchmanship from us, or he has no faith in the things which we believe. The situation is a common one, and comes into the experience of most of us. These are the things which arouse the ministers and the editors of religious newspapers, and about which a great many people naturally talk. There is no record of the subjects which were discussed in the congregation at Corinth, but there are sufficient indication that they debated just such things as these. There were sharp divisions among them. One said I am of Paul: he was a broad churchman. Another said I am of Cephas: he was a high churchman. So it went. The chief difference between their disagreements and ours was in the local application. It is into such a discussion that St. Paul enters with his assertion of the essential necessity of charity.

One of the qualities of charity, he says, is patience. "Charity suffereth long, is not easily provoked, beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things." That is, it is initially important, in all cases of disagreement, to control one's temper. When that is lost, Christianity is abandoned also, and one's case, whatever it is, fails.

Anger awakes a responsive anger, and there is an end to all reasonable discussion, and to all hope of convincing or persuading. Anger inspires keen writing and sharp speaking, but it makes no converts. It is brilliant like the lightning, but the lightning ripens no fruit.

It is also important in cases of disagreement to suspend one's judgment. For another quality of charity is humbleness of mind. "Charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly." The charitable Christian may disagree instinctively. But he waits. He has a decent doubt as to his ability to judge the matter. He hesitates to announce that he is either a better or a wiser Christian than his brethren. And finally he says to himself that it is not unlikely that they know what will advance the Kingdom of God in their own neighborhood better than he does.

Thus he advances from the negative quality of humbleness of mind to the positive quality of fraternal trust. "Charity is kind"; that is, it recognizes the fact of kinship, and accounts every man a brother until he definitely refuses that good name. "Charity envieth not, seeketh not her own, thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth." It is of the nature of charity to believe well of

all men. Most men deserve that kind of fraternal faith. Even those who do not deserve it will often respond to it. It is a plain fact that controversy is, for the most part, waged between good men. One side is probably mistaken, but almost never maliciously mistaken. A frank recognition of all that is true and right on the side of one with whom we disagree, a cheerful appreciation of his loyal intentions, a willingness to give up our contention and accord with him if he can show just cause, and a courteous questioning as to the reason for his word or deed rather than a hasty judgment,—these are the preliminaries of every discussion in which men engage who enter into the debate as gentlemen and as Christians. And a controversy thus begun is already more than half concluded. "Come, let us reason together," is the voice of true charity.

Bishop Whipple, in his autobiography, has this significant passage. "I can remember," he says, "when Pusey was refused license to preach in Oxford; when Maurice was deposed from King's College; when Hampden was denounced as a heretic and Temple branded as an unbeliever. I have lived to see Pusey revered by all who love devoted lives hid with Christ, and to see Maurice beloved by all generous hearts who believe in the brotherhood

of man and the Fatherhood of God. I have lived to see the greatest scholar in England do justice to Hampden, and to see all men rejoice that the Church could call the great-hearted Temple to be the Archbishop of Canterbury." No doubt, Bishop Whipple remembered, also, the controversial abuse which was poured out upon these men, the aspersions upon their honesty, the attacks upon their reputation, the endeavor to drive first one and then another out of the church, the pain and grief to which they were put. They were good men, devout disciples of the Supreme Master, intent upon His service, telling the truth, and other good men hindered them, vilified them, hated them. What a lamentable spectacle! What a sight for the eyes of God! This is what came about, and exists at present, and is likely to go on, for lack of charity: for lack, that is, of the essential Christian qualities of patience, of humility, and of confidence in our brethren.

I have thus dealt with charity as an element in ecclesiastical speech, partly because that is what St. Paul had especially in mind, and partly because it is easier to speak of the faults of controversy than of the faults of conversation. But you see how it all applies to social speech. You see how it touches all our comments on our neighbors.

Let us try to see the good in men. Let us think twice, and more than twice, before we condemn our neighbors. Let us make all possible allowance, in the spirit of Christian charity. Now Lent begins—a season of new spiritual endeavor. Shall we not turn our energies in this direction?—To the regulation of our speech, to the suppression of all unfraternal comment, to the better cultivation of the grace of charity.

WHAT SHALL WE DO, THEN?

And the people asked him, saying, What shall we do then? —*St. Luke* 3 : 10.

INSTEAD of going home after the sermon, indifferent or contented, the congregation waited to ask questions. The preacher had awakened the consciences of the people. He had appealed to their hearts and wills. And the response was remarkable.

It was not the kind of company from which a speaker would naturally expect results. A good many of them had probably come for no better purpose than to see the preacher: and it must be confessed that the preacher's clothes were very queer, and of a sort to draw a crowd. Some of the auditors were publicans; it was their business to collect the Roman taxes. Some of them were soldiers; it was their business to enforce the Roman laws. None of these people were in the habit of going to church. They were non-church goers, as we say. In fact, they were not wanted at church, and their appearance in an assembly of the faithful would have been as unexpected and as unwelcome as

the appearance of an impenitent barkeeper in the meeting of a temperance society. The rest of the congregation, curiously enough, was made up largely of Pharisees and Sadducees, very respectable, very religious and very diginfied and conventional persons.

The best preacher that ever lived could not have satisfied so diverse a company. John the Baptist did not even try. He immediately and cheerfully offended the Pharisees and Sadducees by calling them a generation of vipers. Why are you here? he said. Who has warned you to flee from the wrath to come? That must have reduced the size of the congregation. The Pharisees and Sadducees could not be expected to stay long after that. This unknown young man, coming out of the deserts, and wearing for a coat the skin of a camel, addresses these elderly and eminent gentlemen as a generation of vipers, and calls upon them to amend their lives. It is not likely that they had ever before been spoken to after that fashion; nor is it likely that they waited to hear these offensive terms again. Out they went, angry and embarrassed, amidst the laughter of the publicans and soldiers, and the general delight of sinners. Such a beginning would compel the attention of those who remained. They would listen with all their ears

and hearts. They were impressed profoundly. "Master," they said, "what shall we do?" And the preacher told them, plainly, personally and in detail.

The purpose of religion is not met until that question is asked and answered, and the answer is translated into terms of life.

It has sometimes been taught that religion is chiefly believing, and that its best intentions are satisfied when people take what they are told and declare their faith in it, and are able to say the creed from the first word to the last without making a mistake. But that is only a part of religion, a small part.

It has sometimes been taught that religion is chiefly feeling, a matter of emotion, and that they only are sincerely and undoubtedly religious who have come out of the depths of penitential sorrow into the light of spiritual joy. But that depends upon temperament.

It has sometimes been taught that religion is mainly a matter of ecclesiastical obedience, and that in order to be religious one must submit with all humility and loyalty to church ordinances; he that will be saved, let him be baptized and confirmed, and diligent in his attendance at the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and at the other services of the church. But that is not enough.

Belief is a part of religion, emotion is a part of religion, sacraments are a part of religion, but no one of them is the chief part, and even all three put together do not constitute the chief part. When the people came to John the Baptist, saying, "What shall we do then?" his answer had nothing to do with creeds, only a little to do with sacraments, and not much more to do with emotion. What he said was exceedingly definite and practical. "He that hath two coats let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat let him do likewise." And when the publican came, he said, "Exact no more than that which is appointed you, "And when the soldier came, he said, "Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely, and be content with your wages." John the Baptist defined religion in terms of conduct.

It is true that we are in no way bound to accept John the Baptist's definition of religion. He was neither an apostle nor a disciple of Jesus Christ. He was a man of the Old Testament kind living in the New Testament time. It is very hard to understand John the Baptist, probably because we know so little about him. So far as we can see, he recognized Jesus as the Christ and then went on along his own way, making his own disciples. For a

brief moment of supreme spiritual exaltation at the time of the baptism he was in Christ's company: but that never happened again. In a season of profound depression he sent disciples to ask Jesus whether He were really the Christ or not; he was in grave doubt about it. Otherwise, he keeps his own company, does his own work, lives his own life apart from Christ, and dies his own brave death quite independent of Him. It is beyond our understanding. Jesus spoke well of him in general, but said that the humblest person who was actually within the Kingdom of God was a greater man than John. We are in no way bound to accept the Baptist's interpretation of religion.

Is it chiefly conduct? Is behavior better than belief, action better than emotion, service better than services? Yes; because Jesus Christ said it; and because we know it. To be good is the supreme thing. To live the life is the achievement of achievements. Faith without works is dead. To cry "Lord, Lord," even with tears is of no avail unless we do the things which He says. Sacraments and services are for strength, and strength is for the lifting of burdens, for the fighting of battles, for the doing of appropriate deeds. The men were instinctively right who said, "What shall we do, then?" And the preacher was right

who gave them a plain, definite and practical answer. Christianity is the religion of right conduct, in the spirit of Jesus.

The purpose of Ash Wednesday is to determine the manner of the keeping of Lent. It is set apart as a day of preparation. It is not connected, like other days, with an event or with a person or with a doctrine. It is simply and solely the first day of Lent. The idea is that the quality of this penitential season depends much upon the way in which it is begun, and especially upon the consideration which is given to the details of its observance. The day is appointed as a time of unusual separation from the common duties of life in order that we may decide with some care how we shall conduct ourselves during the next six weeks. It is the time for Lenten plans and resolutions. It is the time to ask ourselves the question which the congregation asked at the end of the sermon, What shall we do, then?

In answering this question it is necessary to have a clear understanding of the purpose of Lent. What is Lent for? This long space of forty days into which we are now entering, what is its right place in our life?

It is plain that all the plans and resolutions of Ash Wednesday wait upon the answer. If the purpose of Lent is this and

that, then we must make our plan thus and so to meet it. If it is other than that, then we must make other plans. If it has no special purpose, then we may let the day go by without making any serious resolutions. If it is only a conventional matter, then let us keep it in a conventional manner. Only let us somehow get into accord with it, and do the thing which the time demands. It is the custom in Lent for people to go often to church and not at all to the theatre. It is the custom to practice some sort of abstinence and to stay away from conspicuous social festivities. What for? Is the theatre good or bad? Is the evening party good or bad? If these things are bad, then they are just as bad at Easter as they are in Lent. If they are good, why are they not good in Lent? What is the reason of it? What does it all mean? What is the purpose of Lent?

The purpose of Lent is the deepening of our religious life. It is a time to consider what sort of persons we are, and to compare the actual with the ideal, and to get nearer to the ideal. Ought we to do that all the time? We certainly ought not to be all the time introspective. It is well that we should at some time look in and not out, be subjective rather than objective, and devote ourselves to an ex-

amination of our character. If we were to do that continually we would be not only very sad, but very unsatisfactory and unsuccessful Christians. We would become morbid and self-centred. We would have pale souls. We would be in spirit what they are in body who sit all day in the house with the doors and windows shut. In the monasteries they tried to have Lent all the year round, and they proved for our benefit that a continual Lent is not good for human beings.

Indeed, it is a question not of obligation, but of possibility. Could we keep Lent all the year, if we would? Not without a change in our nature. For it is everlastingly true of us men that all our progress, spiritual as well as other, is made in pedestrian fashion, as a man walks, first with one foot, then with the other. Now we do this, now we do that. Now we put the emphasis of our life here, now we put it there. To-day we look in towards our own souls, and examine ourselves, and go to church two or three times, and are intentionally self-conscious, and withdraw from some of the distractions of our common life. Then we go back again,—better, let us hope, and stronger, but still back we go into it all, into the distractions, into the temptations, into the urgent interests, into the healthy pleasures

of life, forgetting ourselves, if we can, in thinking helpfully about our neighbors. It is like the alternation of day and night, of winter and summer, of week days and Sunday. That is how we are made. And Lent is in accord with it. Lent is for emphasis. Lent is for that deepening of the religious life which can be effected only by the appointment of certain days and seasons.

Lent, then, being for the purpose of deepening the religious life, and Ash Wednesday being for the purpose of determining how Lent may most profitably be kept, our duty in the matter is plain enough. We are to consider to-day, each for himself, what we ought to do in order to live more religiously, and what steps we ought to take in order to make that resolution effective. The religious life, as it is set forth in the New Testament, from the first sermon of John the Baptist to the last message of John the Evangelist, centres about conduct. The heart of it is simple goodness. "Little children, let no man deceive you; he that doeth righteousness is righteous." When we say, therefore, that the purpose of Lent is to deepen the religious life, we mean that its purpose is to assist us to be better men and women, that we may think more worthy thoughts and speak more profitable words, and, in general,

behave better than we are behaving at present. That is the supreme intention of this holy season.

This is, accordingly, a day for consideration, for comparison, and for resolution.

We are to consider what kind of persons we are at this moment. We are to compare ourselves with those who are better than we are, in order to see more clearly what we ought to be: with our friends and neighbors, with the saints and heroes of the great books, especially with the supreme saint and hero of the greatest book. And then we are to resolve what we will do this Lent that we may live aright. In general we are to separate ourselves from all that may distract us from this emphatic intention to do better, and we are to surround ourselves with all the influences which are likely to assist us in that intention.

This is where the abstinence of Lent belongs. This is the reason for the unusual quietness of life which is the common quality of these weeks. This is why we are advised not to go here or there, and not to do this or that. It is because we have something else to do, because we are trying to accomplish a task which needs all the time and interest which we can give to it. If anybody is not intent upon that task, let him

go on through Lent making no difference in his engagements. The two belong together, the task of amendment and the separation from social life in order to accomplish it. If there is no special task in hand, the abstinence from social festivity has no meaning. Also, if it is found in anybody's case that these social occupations are not, as a matter of fact, distracting, that he can enter into them and still have sufficient opportunity to apply himself to the special aim of making himself a better man, then let him continue in them. The purpose of Lent is not to secure a space of quiet, but to be quiet for the better doing of a certain work. The essential thing is the achievement of the work.

This is where the services and other devotions of Lent belong. They are all subordinate to the supreme purpose of amending our faults. To go to church several times a day and still to talk unkindly about our neighbors is to miss the connection between the aids to religion and religion itself. The services are meant to make us better. We are to attend them with that intention. We are to use them for that end. We are to listen to the Scriptures and the sermons, we are to join in the prayers and the praises, we are to remember the life and death of Christ in the sacrament,

crying out to God in them all and through them all, O God, help me to be better: make me a better man or woman; assist me with Thine infinite strength to overcome my faults and sins, my negligences and ignorances, and all which Thou dost see to be amiss in me. O God, help me to be better.

That is what we are to do in general for a good Lent. In particular, we are to select a single fault which we will fight, or a single virtue which we will strengthen. When they asked St. John the Baptist what they should do then, he did not tell them simply to be good, he told them to be good in certain particulars, definite, practical and personal ways. What these ways are, we are to-day to determine each for our own self. Is there not some fault or sin of thought or speech of which you are conscious? Ought you not to be doing something which you are not at present doing? Ought you not to develop some moral quality which is at present insufficiently developed in you—as consideration for others, or punctuality, or patience?

These are the right Ash Wednesday questions. Upon such questions and the answers which we give them depends the spiritual value of this Lent.

THE MEANING OF THE TEMPTATION

Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.—*Matt.* 4 : 1.

It is plain that the record of our Lord's temptation is stated in spiritual terms. The dramatic action is to be read like the description of the Holy City in the Book of Revelation. The meaning is not upon the surface, but beneath it. The stones of the desert, the pinnacle of the temple, the peak of the hill are to be looked for on the celestial rather than on the terrestrial map. They are sacramental facts : that is, they are the outward and visible forms of spiritual realities.

The story of the temptation is akin to that article of the Creed in which we say that Christ sits at the right hand of God. What we have here is a symbol. Taken literally, the Creed means that God has a right hand, but we know that God is an omnipresent spirit. He has no more a right hand than the wind. In Japan, when they came to translate the Creed into the language of that country, they were obliged to say that Christ sits at the left hand of God : because with the Japanese,

the left is the side of honor. Did that translation contradict the Creed? Literally, yes; but spiritually, no. In this case the statement is of significance and value not for what it says, but for what it symbolizes.

So it is with the temptation. When we read, for example, that our Lord was tempted to turn stones into bread; that does not mean anything to us until we find out what that act symbolized. It must be interpreted, like a parable. That is the beginning of any right reading of this narrative. It is a parable. Jesus Christ, called by the Spirit into the work of His ministry, went apart into a solitary place to determine the principles and plans which that call involved. There He made certain great decisions. And afterwards He told His disciples that they were, saying, The devil came suggesting this and that, and I answered thus and so.

It is plain that the decisions which were thus represented by the three temptations had to do with our Lord's ministry. That is indicated by the time at which these temptations beset Him. The word "then," with which the story opens, points back to the baptism. He went into the wilderness straight from the river. He went with the voice from heaven still sounding in His ears, "This is My beloved

Son." And when He came out, He entered at once upon His ministry. Here is one who is summoned to a great task; before He undertakes it He goes away by Himself to think and pray. What is He thinking about? What is He praying about? Evidently, about the task.

The three temptations have many meanings and touch our lives at many points, but the primary meaning is the significance which they had for Him. That is what I purpose to consider. What was it which our Lord decided as He stood confronting these temptations? What principles did He here definitely establish for the doing of His work and the living of His life?

Take now the temptations in their order. The Lord is hungry. Indeed, as He looks forward into the years to come He perceives that He is likely to be hungry many times. He is a poor man, and He intends to give up the trade on which He is dependent for his living. He will stand no longer at the bench as the carpenter. He will go out into the world, having no regular means of support, having no place to lay His head, intent solely on His mission. The tempter suggests that He make use of His supernatural powers for His own good. But to this suggestion our Lord makes no reply. His answer deals wholly with the

relation between the physical and the spiritual. "Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word which proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

That is, the concerns of the body are to be in subordination to the concerns of the spirit. Our Lord is saying to Himself what He afterwards said to His disciples, "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." He is making the venture of faith, determining to take no thought what He shall eat, or what He shall drink, or wherewithal He shall be clothed, resolving to dismiss from His mind all anxiety about the morrow.

You see how logically the first temptation was the first. The evangelists differ as to the order of the other two, but they all agree that the series of decisions began here with the question of bread. Of course, they did. That was the first thing to be decided. How can I leave the shop? How can I enter on a course of life which seems to lead properly to starvation? How can I give myself, poor as I am, to a mission in which there is not only no material gain but no material reward whatever. The Messiah has no stipend: the place is not a salaried position. Can I, with prudence, accept it?

This, you perceive, is an alternative with which many men have become acquainted in their own experience. Here is a young man standing where Jesus stands, at the beginning of his active life, entering into his responsibilities, and making his plans. He is conscious of the possession of certain gifts of God,—strength, ability, the power to think, the power to speak, the grace of influence among his fellows; and he is making up his mind what to do. And here, before him, is a life of material success, with plenty of money and the pleasures which money will procure; and decent enough, too; but selfish, such a life as will leave the world no better or happier for the living of it.

There is the first temptation in our own contemporary life. There is the choice between the bread and the word, between the physical and the spiritual, between the selfish and the fraternal. All good causes are set forward by men who have met and conquered this temptation. They are the best men in the community, and there are a great many of them. They are serving on committees, they are acting as vestrymen, they are members of boards of trustees, they are officers and counselors and maintainers of benevolent organizations. They are giving time and

care and forethought to the general good. That which is nobody's business because it is everybody's business, they are taking for their province. The true success of a college, the true success of a church, is to be measured by the number of such public-minded persons resulting from its influence. These good citizens are exalting the spiritual life in themselves and in the community. And therein they are following the example of Him who met and overcame the first temptation.

The second temptation was altogether different. If we may say that the temptation to turn stones into bread was addressed to the natural man, the temptation to leap from the temple and to do homage to Satan on the top of the hill were addressed especially to the spiritual man; that is, they appealed to our Lord as a religious teacher and leader. These two were temptations incident to His spiritual calling. He had definitely committed Himself to the great work to which He had been summoned by the spirit. He was now determining the methods by which that work should be undertaken.

It is an evidence of the subtilty of the second temptation, as of the first, that we ask, What was the harm of it? and have some dif-

ficulty in discovering wherein the thing was wrong. If the angels would really hold Him up, why not leap off the roof?

We get a glimpse of the meaning in our Lord's answer, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God: that is, thou shalt not put the Lord thy God to the test. Thou shalt not set a difficult task before Him, saying, Now let me see whether God is or not. If God will hear this prayer and answer it, I will believe; if He will send me celestial aid in this emergency, and save me out of this dread danger, I will believe; if He will make the creed so plain that my reason must accept it; if He will bring to the argument such signs in heaven above or in the earth beneath as shall convince even my eyes and ears; if He will speak to me as He spoke to Elijah in the cleft of the rock, to Paul on the Damascus road, to John on Patmos island, I will believe. That is a temptation of God. When we try to get God to do particularly and miraculously that which may be done naturally, we tempt God.

Here, I think, was the heart of the second temptation. Jesus was considering the methods whereby the Kingdom of God may be established. He was determining what to do in order to bring men into the kingdom of the truth. Here am I, He says to Himself, in

God's sight His son, but in the people's sight a country carpenter: how shall I gain recognition? May I not appear, in the hour of a crowded service, descending to the court of the temple supported in the arms of angels, and being thus marvelously accredited begin my mission?

You see how natural and how difficult the question was. Shall Christ set about His father's business quietly or dramatically? Shall He be a man like us, walking about the common streets in the attire of the common people, speaking the language of the market, making Himself so informally and familiarly known that the nearness of men's acquaintance shall be an obstacle to faith? or shall He live apart, so different from us common folk, so visibly from above and divine that we cannot help believing in Him? Allegiance to the Kingdom of God,—how shall it be won? Faith in the truth of God,—how shall it be gained? By nature or by miracle? by an appeal to the sense of wonder or by an appeal to the divine in man? by compulsion or by persuasion? Shall I commend the truth by simply telling the truth, or shall I also amaze or scare or force people into accepting it? It was this fundamental question of method which was answered in the second temptation.

Men sometimes complain of the lack of adequate demonstration of the hard sayings of the creeds. They would have the world so ordered, if they could, that theology should be as evident, axiomatic, and convincing as mathematics. They wish that the articles of our belief could be so unanswerably stated that all honest persons must forthwith accept them. They would have the fact of the divine existence written in gold letters across the face of the blue sky. They read in the Nineteenth Psalm that the heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth His handiwork: but when the psalmist adds that all this is done in silence, with neither speech nor language, they shut the book. That is not what they want. They would have the thunder chant the Nicene Creed. They await some certainty, some confirming and compelling sign. "What sign showest Thou then," they asked the Master, "that we may see and believe Thee?" "If Thou be the Christ, if Thou be the Son of God, tell us plainly." It was the second temptation over again.

What can Christ say in answer? It is like demanding of the poet, of the artist, of the musician. If your work is indeed beautiful and inspired of heaven, tell us plainly. What sign showest thou that we may believe and

enjoy? Sign! The thing done is the sign. There it is before you,—poem, statue, symphony, picture: what can the maker add in argument?

So it is with truth: and especially with the truth of the person of Christ. We become citizens of the kingdom of the truth not by mere acceptance of formulas at the hands of authority, but by recognition of the truth itself. The truth is its own argument, its own commendation, its own sign and assurance. In the second temptation, Jesus sees at the same time the heart of truth and the heart of man. He will establish the kingdom of the truth by no appeal to common wonder, but by the quiet manifestation of the truth in His own daily life: not by a vision of supporting angels but by the sight of God Himself seen in the face of the Son of God: not by compulsion, but by recognition.

Then comes the third temptation. The world lies all before Him, to-morrow He goes out to win it. Can He win it by using only ideal means? May He not, in certain reasonable ways, adapt Himself to men as they are? For example, there are ideals of conduct which are fine and beautiful, but unfortunately they are not practical. They will not work under the conditions of contemporary society. That

at least is what the devil says, and he claims to have a pretty good acquaintance with contemporary society. Let us, then, behave ourselves with prudence, and be content to be as good as we can. Even the devil is to be taken into account. If we honestly find that we can effect our purposes by making a little quiet concession to him, let us not be foolish about it; let us lower our banner a little, so that it will go under the arch of the gate. Otherwise, our high ideals may prove to be serious hindrances.

The temptation comes to those who would gain the world. The devil shows us the great world, and often it suffices that he points out to us its obvious advantages. It means position, reputation, power, health, pleasure, material prosperity. And men who stand where Jesus stood, upon the threshold of a larger opportunity, upon the mountain of decision, look along the devil's pointing finger, and are attracted by these shining things. "I will make you rich," he says: and we would be rich. "I will give you the praise of your fellow men:" and we desire it. "I will give you a key which will open the gate of the garden of delight:" and we reach out eager hands to take it. Who can count the foolish people who have aspired to gain the whole world, and as an

initial step thereto have fallen down upon their knees in some secluded place, solitary as the peak of a mountain, and have paid their homage to the fiend? It seemed so fair a bargain: the price was so small, and the return so great: and, anyhow, who can be ideally good? Thus they find themselves, sometimes too late, confronted by the unanswerable question, What shall it profit a man, though he gain the whole world, though he surfeit his ear with the sweet music of applause, though he fill his purse with gold and gems, though he succeed,—and yet fail: in God's sight, and in his own sight, too, fail?

The temptation comes to those who would save the world. For all this which betrays their neighbors, they care little. They look out over the world and long for it, for the world's sake. They would redeem it, they would transform it. Can they do it in an ideal way? Will these fine principles avail, they ask, among men as they are? The alternative is between the ideal and what we call the practical. It confronts every reformer, every statesmen, every minister of God. Can I get along, he says, without a little assistance from the devil? Can I be just, can I be fair, can I be considerate and fraternal and patient safely? Can I succeed if I return good for evil?

"All these will I give Thee": Jesus sees the accomplishment of all His purposes, the complete fulfilment of His mission. To gain the world, to save the world, to wrest us out of the hands of evil, and thus to put a blessed end to all our grieving and our crying, all our pain and sin: to right all wrongs, to bring the glory of the kingdom of the world before the throne of heaven, this is His undertaking. Naturally, as He makes ready for His work, He looks out over the wide earth, and there is an inexpressible longing in His heart: O that I might win these souls, and comfort these sorrows, and expel the devil. Can He go out and tell these ambitious and pugnacious citizens that they are to love their neighbors as themselves, and that if they are struck on one cheek they are to turn the other also? Can He recite the beatitudes in the market square of Capernaum? Must He not modify them in the interests of decent prudence? Must He not admit the devil as a silent partner?

To all of this and much more He answered, Get thee hence, Satan! And on the morrow He departed from the wilderness and began to speak in the streets of crowded towns, proclaiming the whole gospel of God.

CHRIST TRANSCENDENT

And He began to say unto them, this day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.—*Luke* 4: 21.

He had read His text out of the book of Isaiah: "The spirit of the Lord is upon me," —you remember the rest of it. This was the first sentence of His sermon. Not only that: it was the first sentence of His first sermon.

Most of the teaching of our Lord was by way of conversation. He talked with men, taking them out to walk with Him along the country roads, sitting down under the trees, or on the side of the hill, or by the shore of the lake. There was no formality about it, nothing artificial or conventional. Even when He preached a sermon, the congregation said one to another as they went away, "He does not speak like a scribe." And one thing that they meant was that His sermon was not delivered in the synagogue manner. It was amazingly straightforward and natural.

This quality was emphasized by the conditions of conversation, so that they who heard Him talk said: "Never man spake like this man." He uplifted and illuminated and sanc-

tified the opportunities of friendly intercourse; showing us what we ourselves, if we will, may in our measure make of it. He helped men and inspired them by talking with them. His method, His implement of power, the initial sacrament of His religion, was intimate conversation.

But He preached five sermons. At least we know that on five occasions He addressed Himself at some length to a considerable company of listening people. First, in the synagogue at Nazareth; then on the mount; then by the Sea of Galilee, when He spoke in parables; after that in Capernaum, when He said: "I am the bread which came down from heaven"; finally on the slope of Olivet, looking out upon Jerusalem when He discoursed of the last things, of His coming again in judgment. And of these sermons, the first began with the words, "This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears."

That is, we have here the first public utterance of the ministry of Jesus Christ.

He had lived at Nazareth till He had reached the age of thirty years. He had been a carpenter. Then one day, He had left the shop and the town, going a long way down the Jordan valley to hear a preacher; and after the sermon He had gone into the woods

and there had stayed alone a month; then He had gathered about Him a little group of new friends, and had visited Cana and Capernaum, towns in the neighborhood of Nazareth, healing the sick, and one time, they said, changing water into wine. And now he was back again in His own village to give an account of Himself.

So Sunday came—as we would say—and everybody went to church with expectation. The synagogue stood in the midst of the hamlet, like the white meeting-house of a New England village. The service was a good deal like a meeting-house service,—with singing of psalms and reading of scripture and preaching. The minister called on members of the congregation, as is still the custom in some country churches. The men sat on one side of the meeting-house and the women on the other. There was the widow Mary, with her daughters; and across the church, with James and Joseph and Jude and Simon, his brothers, sat the carpenter, her son. The minister called on Jesus, putting into His hands the book of the prophet Isaiah. There He found His text and read it, then closed the book and gave it again to the minister. "And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on Him. And He began to say

unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears."

That is, He began at once to answer the silent question which He read in all their faces. Yes,—He said—what you have heard is true. I have given up my trade. I have left off being a carpenter. I go forth having no means of support, having no place to lay my head, impelled by an imperative divine call. I stand where he stood who said, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor: He hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord."

The first effect of this sermon on the hearers was to fill them with amazement. "All bare Him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth." But this surprise was followed by resentment. "Is not this the carpenter?" they said, "the Son of Mary, the brother of James and Joses and of Judas and Simon? and are not His sisters here with us? And they were offended at Him." And resentment grew into indignation, and at last ended in violence. They

rose up and thrust Him out of the synagogue and out of the town, and tried to kill Him.

When we turn again to the sermon to learn upon what provocation they behaved in this manner, the reason seems far to seek. It is true that the preacher declared the wideness of God's mercy. And that has always been to some souls an offensive doctrine. The Old Testament people accounted it a heresy, because they could not see how God could possibly care for Jews and gentiles at the same time. If He extended His mercy to the heathen, there must be just so much less of it for the faithful. That was probably the mind of the Nazareth congregation. When our Lord reminded them that Elijah was sent to minister to a pagan widow in Sidon, and that Elisha exercised his gifts of healing in behalf of a pagan general from Syria, they did not like it. As good churchmen, they resented it. Even this, however, seems hardly a sufficient explanation of their sudden and cruel turbulence. The truth is that the fire was kindled in the first sentence. The rest of the sermon added fuel and no doubt made the flame hotter, but the initial sentence was enough. More and more as they reflected upon it, as they considered what He meant when He said, "This

day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears," their indignation grew.

This I infer from the fact that on other occasions, when He spoke like that, the words produced the same effect. Once He said, "Before Abraham was, I am," and they took up stones to cast at Him. Another time He said, "I and My Father are one," and again they took up stones to stone Him. Finally they demanded, "Art Thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?" and He replied, "I am." And the high priest rent his clothes, and saith, "What need we any further witnesses? Ye have heard the blasphemy. What think ye?" And they all condemned Him to be guilty of death.

The beginning and the end of our Lord's public ministry touched the same note. His first recorded public word was spoken in the synagogue at Nazareth: "This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears." His last recorded public word was spoken in the High Priest's house at Jerusalem: "I am the Christ; ye shall see Me sitting at the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." The first time, they tried to kill Him; the last time they succeeded: and for the same offense, —for what He said about Himself.

There are two opinions in the minds of seri-

ous persons as to the place of Jesus in the life of the race. According to one opinion, He is wholly contained and fairly accounted for within the limits of humanity; according to the other opinion, He transcends those limits.

The humanitarian idea of the personality of Jesus has in it much that is attractive, much that is of lasting value. It calls attention to a side of infinite truth which has sometimes been neglected, and always with spiritual loss. The transcendent idea tends to take Christ away from common life, away from actuality, into the unreal region of the saints of the stained windows. It tends to make Him a creed rather than a person. It sets Him in the remote sky and draws a veil of cloud between Him and the world. The humanitarian theory has been for the most part a protest against this separation. It has refused to be parted from the Son of man. It has resolutely declined every doctrine, no matter how venerable, no matter by what authority approved, which has seemed to say by word or by inference that Christ is of such a divine nature, and so transcends the weakness of humanity that He cannot be in any true sense our example, and that He cannot by any actual experience sympathize with us.

The humanitarian believer in Jesus finds

Him a man among us men, only better than any of us,—infinitely better, if you will, than any of us,—the supreme Master of our life, the "summit spirit" of all the ages of the world. He delights to read in the naive and unfailingly honest narrative of the evangelists that Jesus got very tired like the rest of us, and then got rested by sitting down beside the road as we do. He rejoices in the record of His friendly life, His days spent in the company of peasants, His homely intercourse with John and Andrew, His preference for sinners, all illuminated and glorified by the tragedy of His death upon the cross. He reads and rereads those bold sentences which say that even the Master of the soul was in all points—think of it!—in all points tempted like as we are. True, the writer hastens to add, "Yet without sin." But He was tempted: that is where we draw very near to Him and take His hand,—He was tempted just as we are.

Such a believer may be called a disbeliever, but even that he endures with cheerfulness, cherishing within his soul this fair picture of a real, living and loving, human Christ. And in his heart, he loves Him: in his life he serves Him. Do you think that Jesus Christ, though He be divine according to all the exacting definitions of the Athanasian Creed, will reject

that honest love? Do you think that He will disown, now or in the life to come, that reverence, and loyalty, and faith? He said once that whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him. That, I take it, covers all erroneous doctrine. It is the word against the Holy Ghost for which there is no forgiveness: the persistent contradiction of the voice of God in the heart of man, the refusal to obey the commands of conscience, the sin which shuts its eyes against the light,—this is the fatal thing, this is the heresy for which God cares.

I am taking for granted that the humanitarian theory of the person of Jesus is mistaken. Attractive as it is, true as it is so far as it goes, harmonious as it is with some of the most dominant notes of current thought, and reinforced by learning, and philosophy and literature, and by the argument of unselfish living, it does not lay hold of the general heart of man. It does not get itself accepted. It makes no appreciable impression upon the instinctive concensus of religious conviction. It seems most reasonable, and easy to believe, and yet people do not believe it. A few believe it, but they belong, and have in all ages belonged, to a microscopic minority. There has never been a time, in any century,

or in any decade of a century, since the beginning of Christianity, when the humanitarian conception of the person of Christ has been comfortably at home among Christians.

Mr. Emerson said one time, in his notable Address to Divinity Students, that historical Christianity "dwells with noxious exaggeration about the person of Jesus. The soul," he said "knows no person." But the difficulty is that what he calls exaggeration of the person of Jesus is a constant, inseparable and essential part of Christianity itself. It is wrought into the elemental structure of the Christian religion, from the Te Deum of this morning's service, back to the hymn to Christ as God which Justin Martyr heard the Christians singing fifty years after the death of the last of the Apostles, and back of that to Thomas kneeling at the feet of Jesus, crying, "My Lord and my God!" and back of that to the word of Christ Himself, when He said in the synagogue at Nazareth, "This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears."

For the congregation of His kinfolk and neighbors, after the first moment of surprise was over, knew what He meant. They knew that He declared Himself to be above and beyond the limitations of humanity. Speaking in their own language, interpreting His asser-

tion in the terms of their own religious thought, He announced Himself as the Messiah. And they understood that that carried with it the transcendent claim. He being a man, they said, makes Himself God. That was their translation of His meaning; and He let it stand, because they had translated Him aright. Finally, He died upon that accusation, repeating the great claim, and making it clearer and stronger than before.

The reason why the humanitarian conception of our Lord, with all its apparent sanity, with all its persuasive sincerity, does not lay hold upon either the mind or the heart of man, is because it is incapable of harmonization with the words of Christ Himself. From His first sermon to His last, from the beginning of His ministry to the end, He Himself was the heart of His message and His mission.

Socrates converses with his disciples in words of wisdom which, after all the centuries, are still fresh and strong and helpful, but he never makes his own personality the centre of his teaching. Gautama Buddha lies dying surrounded by his friends. "It may be," he says, "that in some of you the thought may arise: the words of our teacher are ended, we have lost our master. But it is not so. The truths and the rules of the Order which I have

taught and preached, let these be your teacher when I am gone." The personality was nothing: the truth, separable from the personality, was everything.

But the method of the ministry of Jesus Christ was so removed from the manner and the message of these great teachers, that His name cannot be spoken in the same sentence with theirs without incongruity. It is not that the truth which He taught so far exceeded their message of righteousness and light, but that He Himself was a person so infinitely different from them. Upon this difference He insisted. "Whom say ye that I am?" He asked, trying His disciples to see if yet they understood. "Ye are from beneath," He said,—He who is recognized as the Master of Humility—"Ye are from beneath, I am from above."

So it is throughout. The distinctive, differentiating characteristic of the teaching of Jesus Christ is that He makes His personality the centre of His message. He asks men to believe in Him. "I," He says, "am the way, the truth and the life." Whoever else said that? or could have said it? And this personality, thus made the heart of His message, transcends the limits of humanity. To say that He was a man, even to say that He was

the supreme man, the "summit spirit" of all time, does not describe Him. Yes, there are human limitations, and He being a man, is of necessity bound within them, limitations of body, and—if you will—of knowledge. But after they are all discovered and set down, there He is towering into the illimitable sky as the mountain towers above the geologist. There He is, by His words, by His deeds, by His life, by His death and resurrection, passing all understanding.

The foundation of all that we know about Him is the record of the synoptic Gospels, and the interpretation of it by St. John and St. Paul. And it is charged in every page with a conception of Him as the manifestation of the Most High God. The idea of Him as transcending the limits of humanity cannot be got out of the original documents of the Christian religion, except by a process of continual and arbitrary erasure. You must explain, and explain again, and explain away, until at last in place of the Christ of the Christian Scriptures and of the Christian Church you have put an altogether different Christ of your own imagination. Only Christ transcendent, in humanity but also above humanity, satisfies the plain sense of His own words.

What difference does it make? It makes

this difference: If Jesus Christ was no more than a man, then we are still guessing at God. He said great things about God. He told us that God is our Father, who cares for each of us and loves us, that He forgives our sins and is forever ready to help us to be better, and that those who go out of our sight go into the everlasting joy of His blessed presence. But if He was no more than a man, what did He know about it? What assurance is there in His words, beyond that of the splendid sayings of prophets and philosophers and poets?

If, on the other hand, Jesus Christ is more than a man; if when he describes heavenly things He can say in all truth, "We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen"; then a new and unprecedented element has entered into the discussion. It is no longer possible to define religion as the "poetic interpretation of experience." Christ transcends experience, and speaks the certain word of life and truth eternal.

THE CHRISTIAN GOODNESS

And seeing the multitudes, He went up into a mountain: and when He was set, His disciples came unto Him: and He opened His mouth and taught them.—*Matt.* 5 : 1.

THUS He preached His second sermon. The first was spoken in the synagogue at Nazareth, in the midst of the customary service, according to the rubrics, in the place where sermons were expected. The most profound, and thorough and far-reaching of all revolutions began in the most quiet way, endeavoring to live at peace so far as was possible with all the ecclesiastical conventionalities. Christ announced His mission in the synagogue. The minister put the Bible into His hands, and He took His text from the lesson for the day. It is a symbol of His constant endeavor to carry over the old into the new, and to hold both together in the unity of the Christian faith.

But the congregation thrust Him out of doors, and though He still continued for a time to go to church, and indeed preached His fourth sermon in the synagogue at Capernaum, the church was thenceforth an inhospitable place. Thus He exercised His ministry, for the most part, out of doors. Here He stood,

then, on a mountain, under the sky, apart from all artificial limitations, with no walls between Him and His fellow men, and no roof to shut out the sight of heaven.

The sermon in the synagogue had touched two dominant and characteristic notes of the Christian religion: personality and universality. The preacher had begun at once to make His own personality the centre of His teaching; He had declared His Messiahship; He had thereby asserted His essential difference from His neighbors. This done, He had proceeded to maintain the universality of the fatherhood of God, saying that God cared not for Jews only but for gentiles. It is hardly possible for us, to whom these assertions have been the fundamentals of our religious thought all our lives, to appreciate the startling novelty of them at the time when they were first preached. Nor do we very clearly understand, unless we reflect upon the matter, that it is in these two respects that Christianity differs to-day from all other religions. It is the religion of Jesus Christ, and it is intended to be the religion of the whole world. There is nothing like it anywhere else.

To these two characteristic notes the second sermon added a third. The Sermon on the Mount, into which St. Matthew has no doubt

gathered the teaching of our Lord on many occasions, is concerned from beginning to end with character. It proclaims the supremacy of character. It declares that the prime purpose of religion is the maintenance of a certain standard of character, and that God Himself cares more for this than He does for any other aspect of the life of man. And this again was wholly and perplexingly new. There were many religions competing for the allegiance of men, but not one of them was setting forth character as the essential requirement of acceptance with God. They were all content with ceremonial. They were all satisfied with the sacrifices which men could carry in their hands and offer on the altar.

This was true even of the Jews. The religion of the Old Testament was, indeed, the worship and obedience of the most holy God. The standard of right living there set forth was a lofty standard. We go back to-day to the psalmists and the prophets for high ideals and for plain directions how to realize them, to which the New Testament adds little. That God is a righteous God, and that He requires His people to be righteous, is Old Testament teaching. When the scribe summed up the religion of the Jews in the two commandments of love to God and love to our neighbor, our

Lord said, "Thou hast answered right"; but then He added, "This do, and thou shalt live." For the scribe and his contemporaries were doing other than that. They had so exalted ceremonial that even among the Jews it had taken precedence over character.

Thus our Lord said in His sermon that true righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, and so saying He condemned the whole contemporary religion of the Jews. For the scribes and Pharisees were the religious leaders. At the end of the sermon the people were astonished at His doctrine, for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. That is, He spoke as one who speaks the words of God, and yet the things which He said were not such as the religious teachers of that day were saying. It is true that in His exaltation of character He did but preach again the sermons of the prophets; just as in His assertion of the wideness of God's mercy He taught what they had taught before Him. But the old truth had been forgotten. Christ came into a world where everybody was intent on ceremonial as the chief thing in religion, and in the Sermon on the Mount, and in all His other words and deeds, He declared that God cares for the heart of man, and is served aright only by the

worship of a righteous life. It is a good thing to go to church; and to say the creed is excellent; but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.

Let us now consider some of the qualities of Christian goodness as they are set forth in the Sermon on the Mount.

The first is *Courtesy*. The word is not quite adequate, but it is the best I can find to express the general meaning of the beatitudes.

These eight blessings are invoked upon the passive virtues. And most of these are such as make people pleasant to live with. They include good manners, without artificiality; and consideration, without self-seeking; and gentleness. The word courtesy, which refers to the conduct of kings' courts, is an endeavor to express the best behavior; and this not so much from the side of morals as from the side of grace and beauty and sweet companionship. It has in mind the graces of life, and all that goes to make men and women attractive.

The beatitudes imply the insufficiency of goodness. Goodness is indeed essential, but good people are sometimes very disagreeable. There is a kind of hard, conscientious, angular, unsmiling goodness which may perhaps secure the salvation of the individual soul, but which repels the neighbors. People say, "If that is

what it means to be a saint, let me stay in the company of the cheerful sinners." For missionary purposes, for social service, for the advancement of the kingdom of heaven, it is not enough to be good; it is necessary to be good-looking. That is, there is a certain sympathy and kindliness and human nature by which the Christian religion and all other good causes are commended. The element of likeableness is inherent in the Christian standard of character. Blessed are the poor in spirit: blessed, that is, are they who have no oppressive sense of spiritual possession, who do not congratulate themselves that they have more treasure in heaven than most of their contemporaries, and are not self-consciously pious. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, who have an entirely natural longing to be better, and a good appetite for that which is good, and are neither proud nor ashamed of it. Blessed are the meek. The word means gentle. It is that which we use to make the ancient title of gentleman and gentlewoman. Blessed are all quiet, unobtrusive, considerate folk, who have good manners and pleasant voices, and who are congenial people to live with.

The beatitudes imply not only the insufficiency of goodness, but the inferiority of

greatness. I mean greatness in the sense of mastery, and brute strength, and self-seeking and self-assertion. The Christian character as set forth in the Sermon on the Mount is precisely that to which our Lord referred when He said "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted," and again, "He that will be great among you, let him be your servant." Aggressiveness, like goodness, is essential; there must be some before, as well as others behind; there must be leadership. Simon Peter, who always spoke first, is honored among the apostles beyond Simon the Zealot, who, so far as we know, never said anything. But what our Lord excludes is all pushing and crowding, all exaltation of physical might, all precedence of the athlete over the scholar and the saint, all disregard of the rights or even of the tastes of others.

Thus Christianity is differentiated from all other religions by the place which it gives to women. Most of the religions are monopolized by men. The worshipers are men. The fact that women are in majority in all our churches is highly significant. It means in part that Christianity appeals to the entire community, and takes our life just as it is; but it means also that the characteristic Christian goodness is of a kind which disre-

gards all superiority of physical strength. Like art and music and letters and all the finer sides of life it invites those who are gentle.

The second quality of Christian goodness, as it is taught in the Sermon on the Mount, is *Fraternity*. This is courtesy, deepened and strengthened and enriched, till it is developed from a grace into a virtue, and taken over from the passive to the active side of life.

The idea that the service even of our enemy is a part of the rule of a righteous life finds expression in the Old Testament. When St. Paul said, "If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink, for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head," he was quoting from the book of Proverbs. But the meaning is that the most effective vengeance, the best way to hurt one's enemy worst, like heaping live coals on the top of his head, is to return good for evil. When you do that you hurt his feelings. You inflict upon him a very subtle but a very painful pain. You get the better of him in such a way as to disable him for further attack. This is a good thing to do, but the motive is far removed from the Sermon on the Mount.

What our Lord did, partly by His words but much more by His example, was to bring into the world a new sense of human rela-

tionship. When He taught that God is our Father, He implied that all we are brethren; and He devoted Himself throughout all His ministry to the great task of persuading us to live as brothers should. Here He centred all His ethical instruction. And this He illustrated, every day He lived, by going about doing good. At last He was able to add a sentence to the second of the two inclusive commandments. That commandment, according to the reading, "Thou shall love thy neighbor as thyself," touched the very top of ethics, so far as social duty was at that time understood, even among the Jews. But Jesus said, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as I have loved you." Therein He brought to social life not so much a new precept as a new spirit. When the lawyer asked Him, "Who is my neighbor?" He answered by a parable, the point of which is that the right question is not, "Who is my neighbor?" but "Have I a neighborly disposition? When I see an opportunity to do good to any man do I instinctively stop and do it, or do I pass by on the other side?"

This insistence on fraternity, this characteristic of the Christian goodness, enables us to reassure those who think that the element of universality in the Christian religion was in-

troduced into it by St. Paul. Christianity, as it seems to them, was only a new Judaism within the old race limits, till St. Paul came and carried it to the gentiles. It is true that our Lord said little explicitly concerning the gentiles: it is true that to the Apostles,—for example, to St. Peter,—the mission to the gentiles was so novel and adventurous and unwelcome that it took a vision from on high and three men to induce him to visit a gentile family. Plainly, he did not perceive, nor did the others, that the religion of Jesus Christ knew no difference between Jew and gentile. It was St. Paul who said that, and he maintained it in the face of bitter Christian opposition.

Nevertheless, our Lord's first sermon, as I said, declared the wideness of God's mercy, and showed how the prophets ministered to pagan people. Presently, when the time came, He Himself blessed a heathen woman in the land of Tyre and Sidon. And at the last, He sent the Apostles to preach the gospel to all nations. But even without these words and acts, the heart of all universality, the source of the ever-widening stream whose fertilizing waters shall eventually cover the earth, is this plain doctrine of the fraternity of man. It is all contained in that,—all demolition of

divisive barriers, all foreign missions, all social service, all democracy. St. Paul interpreted his master truly. This was what Christ meant.

Not even the Apostles understood Him fully, or perceived the consequences of His words which they remembered and recorded. But when He said in the Sermon on the Mount, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you,—that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven," He began at that moment the everlasting destruction not only of the wall which parted the Jewish church from the outer world, but of all manner of unfraternal separation. There He declared war against war, and against slavery, whether black or white, and against the follies and the cruelties of caste. These evils still exist, but not in their old might. They and the true religion of Jesus Christ cannot exist together.

To these two distinctive qualities of Christian goodness,—courtesy and fraternity,—our Lord in the Sermon on the Mount added a third. There is no true goodness, He said, without the virtue of *Sincerity*.

This was in part the requirement of a faithful correspondence between the word and the deed. The word is of value only so far as it

represents the deed. Men are known to God, and ought to be known to their neighbors, by their fruits. "Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven."

Sincerity demands also an accurate correspondence between the hand and the heart. The hand is interpreted to God by the heart. Alms that are done to be seen of men have their reward: they get the praise which was desired, and that is the end of it. So it is even with such distinctively religious acts as prayer and fasting: what are they for? what do we honestly intend? what do we want? In the end, we reap just what we have sown. The praise of man—if that is what we seek—is one thing: the praise of God is another and sometimes a very different thing. The divine basis of reward is motive.

It is evident that the Sermon on the Mount, though it was preached in the Church of the Blue Dome, was nevertheless addressed to religious people. Indeed, the congregation, having come as we are told, from many directions, drawn by interest in Him, was no doubt more religious in its spirit than the conventional assembly of ordinary church-goers to whom He spoke from the pulpit at Nazareth. They

were religious people, to whom we ourselves are, I hope, akin. So that in speaking as He did to them He spoke to such as we are. And when He came to this matter of sincerity, and said that a man may say his prayers two times every day, crying, "Lord, Lord," and go to church Sunday after Sunday with unintermitted punctuality all his life, and yet not be in any true sense a good man, He said a thing that we may profitably consider. There they stood, those excellent people, and the Lord taught them the Ten Commandments. The Ten Commandments? All these had they kept from their youth up. Have you? He said. You have indeed kept them in the letter; you have maintained an excellent standard of respectability, and have received the praise of men. But every commandment touches the heart. Every commandment may be shattered into a thousand pieces so gently that even your wife, your husband, your children, your most familiar friend, shall never suspect it. But God knows.

One of the commandments says, "Thou shalt do no murder." We are safe enough from that. That was intended for the criminal classes. No, the Lord says, that was meant for the admonition of the saints. Whosoever is angry with his brother breaks it. Another

commandment says, "Thou shalt not commit adultery." Surely it is an insult to a Christian congregation to read that in their ears. But the Lord lifts it up like a shining light and flashes it into the remotest recesses of the human soul. Well, then, "Thou shalt not steal"; there is no need to say that, week after week, to vestrymen and other reputable citizens. Is there not, indeed? The newspapers are at this moment crying out in indignation over the thefts of Christian men. That is the interpretation of sincerity. It means such an allegiance to the will of God, such a response to the love of God, that He unto whom all hearts are open sees it, He from whom no secrets are hid perceives and accepts and blesses it.

St. Luke in his report of our Lord's sermon says that He went into a mountain to pray, but that when He began to preach He came down and stood in the plain. He certainly did come down and stand on the level ground of our own temptations. There He proclaimed the fundamentals of the new goodness. There He declared that above all else, character is preëminent and precious in the sight of God. There He taught that courtesy and fraternity and sincerity are essential qualities of Christian character. Finally, He said that they who

hear this word and do it are like a house which is founded on a rock. They who heed it not are like a house whose foundation is the unsubstantial sand.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the Kingdom.—*Matt.* 4 : 23.

This account antedates all of our Lord's recorded sermons. Then He spoke at Nazareth, and then He preached the Sermon on the Mount; but this was His initial theme. Presently we read, in the midst of His ministry, that He went throughout every city and village preaching and bringing the glad tidings of the Kingdom of God. The two words, "glad tidings," are combined in the Saxon word "gospel," that is, good spell, good speech. And it thus appears that the gospel was primarily a proclamation of the Kingdom of God. Thus it is written several times, "the gospel of the Kingdom." Christ came to bring good news, and the heart of the good news was that the kingdom of heaven was at hand. Not only is this phrase used again and again to describe the content of our Lord's message, but the very last conferences which He held with His apostles, before He went away out of their sight, dealt with the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God. Of these many discourses

only one remains at length in the record. One time by the Sea of Galilee, while He sat in a boat and the congregation stood upon the shore, He preached a sermon in parables; and the theme of every parable was the Kingdom of God.

We do not need to be told that this was a great subject. The fact that our Lord preached about it everywhere He went for three years shows that. And the things which He said confirm it. For so various were His utterances, and some of them so vague and perplexing, that to this day nobody knows precisely what He meant. Did He take the Kingdom of God according to the common Messianic expectation of His time, or did He contradict that expectation? Did He promise a sudden or a gradual establishment of the sovereignty of God? Once He compared it to a flash of lightning; another time He likened it to the growth of a grain of mustard seed. Did He think of the kingdom as in heaven after the last day or as on earth in His own generation? These questions are still in debate among scholars, without much prospect of being adequately answered. They mean that the Kingdom of God is too great and high a matter to be got into any formula. Let us not fall into the "fallacy of this or that." Let us not con-

clude that if this is true, that must therefore be an error. All great truth brings this and that mysteriously together. One word touches one side, and another word another side of the celestial round of truth. To perceive how and where they meet and by their meeting are reconciled in perfect harmony, is beyond the reach of ordinary sight.

Probably, our Lord's exposition of the Kingdom of God included the distinctive characteristics of His teaching which appear in the discourse at Nazareth and in the Sermon on the Mount. It touched the three notes of personality and universality and character. No doubt He centred the Kingdom of God about His own personality: it was His own Kingdom. Was He not crucified as one who claimed to be a king? No doubt He declared that the Kingdom would be universal. It is like a field, He said, and the field is the world. No doubt He perpetually insisted on the preëminence of character: the Kingdom of God presupposes the obedience of man to God.

But the kingdom of God, including personality and universality and character, adds another factor to the equation of the Christian religion. This I will call organization. I mean that our Lord recognized the social instinct and assigned a place to it in His revela-

tion of the spiritual life. He perceived that man is essentially a social being. If man is to be saved,—whether that salvation is a present or a future fact,—he must be saved in society and by social forces. The practical and tangible outcome of this perception is the Christian church.

Having set forth character, in the Sermon on the Mount, as the supreme requirement of religion, the next question is, "How, then, can character be gained and maintained?" And this He answers, in the sermon of parables, in terms of social life. The word "Kingdom" implies the living of a life in common, under the law, under the king, with community of aspiration and community of action, every man helped by the fact that he is the citizen of such a kingdom; and every man helping side by side with his fellow citizens, thereby magnifying his own might. For in the arithmetic of moral progress two times one make ten: one may chase a thousand but two shall put ten thousand to flight. And all this is realized in the church, which exists for these two purposes, first to help the individual man, and then by the strength of individuals united to help the whole society of men.

The first business of the Christian church is to help the individual man. He needs it. He

lives in a world wherein he is beset by continual temptation. He knows by bitter experience how hard it is to be good. He perceives the moral demand which is made upon him by the Christian religion and he instinctively responds to it. He sees that that is the thing to do. But how can he do it? One thing is certain, he can no more do it by his own individual, unaided will than a seed can grow on the bare surface of a barn floor. I am not thinking at this moment of what is commonly called the supernatural; though I believe that Professor Bowne states a great truth in his book on "The Immanence of God," when he says that "the undivineness of the natural and the unnaturalness of the divine is the great heresy of popular thought respecting religion." I have in mind only this commonplace, that whoever would grow, in any sort of way, must put himself and keep himself within reach of the influences which make towards the kind of growth which he desires. And as the earth is to the seed so is the church to the soul.

By services, by sermons, by sacraments, the church ministers to the spiritual life. It is the one institution in the community which exists for that purpose. It was founded by Jesus Christ to make provision for a universal human

need: and if He had not founded it, this human instinct would have demanded its establishment. The ordinary man cannot be good alone. He is not made that way. He needs the inspiration of the companionship of his neighbors. It was not without profound knowledge of human nature that Christ promised His eternal presence wherever two or three should be assembled in His name. He who would live a Christian life needs to be taught, by the reading and exposition of the supreme spiritual book: he needs to be encouraged, by the example of his friends; and he needs to be brought into the realized presence of the unseen and the divine, as the services and the sacraments will bring him. He who is trying to live a Christian life without the Christian church is like one who should try to be a musician without ever going to a concert. It is not reasonable. In a world where goodness is confessedly so difficult, let us make use of all the help there is.

The first business of the Christian church, I said, is to assist the individual man. Its second business is to set forward the whole society of men. The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field. There is the church in its first aspect, ministering to men, to this man here and

to that man there, as the seed falls upon the ground. But again, the kingdom of heaven is likened unto leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was seasoned. There is the church in its second aspect, as a subtle and potent force in the world, gradually transforming the kingdoms of the nations into the divine kingdom of the Lord and of His Christ.

That is, the church is a social institution. It stands for the betterment of the general life. The court-house is the symbol of law, the hospital of medicine, the school of education, the gallery of art, the shop of commerce, the church of religion. Every good citizen is vitally concerned with the maintenance of all these elements of the common life. Each of them represents the assemblage and organization of certain vital forces. The people who appreciate law or art or education, and who believe that the whole community will be bettered and enriched by what they have to give, bring their belief into life by association. As we say, they "support" the thing. And by such support they make their law or their art or their education potent among the people. The man who says that he believes in good government, and yet when the time comes to show his faith by his works does not even cast

a vote,—he does not believe in good government. He is not taking part in the organized procedure by which alone an upright administration can be had.

So it is with religion. Does a man believe in God and in his own soul? Does he believe in character and in the ideal life as it was lived by Jesus Christ? Does he believe in moral betterment, in the reformation of abuses, in the maintenance of high standards of purity and honesty, and in the power of an awakened and enlightened public conscience to effect these ends? Then the thing for him to do is to associate himself with his brethren who are of the same mind in strengthening that institution whose essential intention is to get these great things done.

That is, he ought to be a churchman. Can a man be a Christian without being at the same time a churchman? Only as a man can be a citizen without being at the same time a voter. Going to church on Sunday and going to the polls on election day are the religious and the political expression of the same principle. The man says, "I believe in the institution; I believe in its purpose and in its potency; and here I stand that I may be a part of it."

It is true that the Church is exposed to the characteristic temptations which always attack

the institutional life. It is tempted to exaggerate the importance of the service, and to exaggerate the importance of the society.

That is, there is a constant tendency to substitute ceremonial for righteousness in the demand which the Church makes on the individual man. Let him come with devout punctuality to our prayers and praises, and contribute freely of his means, and we will not be too hard upon his natural infirmities. If he is a good churchman, we will take for granted, even in the face of the facts, that he is a good Christian. Attendance at the services of the church may mean so much, and ought to mean so much, that the service comes easily to be not only the test but the satisfaction of religion. This, of course, is as old as human nature. It is at the heart of all that long contention between the priest and the prophet which is found in the Old Testament; and then in the New, between the Christian and the Pharisees; and then in the time of the Reformation between the Protestant and the Catholic. The form is exalted out of all spiritual perspective; first the sacrifices and then the sacraments are transformed from means to ends; and the supreme necessity of character, as the reason for the being of the church, is disregarded.

There is also a constant tendency to substitute the good of the society for the good of the community. The society is so important to the community, the interests of the two are so bound up together, it means so much to have religion set forth by the symbol of a great, beautiful building, by the aid of a splendid service, and by the voice of a strong church, that the organization, which provides these things, is naturally emphasized. But the time comes when there is an alternative between the advancement of the society and the best interests of the community, when the church instead of giving itself to the people, and laboring unselfishly to make them wise and free, devotes its energies to the increase of its own wealth and might. Then it misses its mission. "He that saveth his life shall lose it," is as true of a church as it is of man. And the truth has been verified over and over again in the history of the Christian society. Any church which for any reason—for pride, for self-assertion, even in defense of a divine right,—stands apart from the life of the community and contributes nothing to it, has thus far ceased to be Christian. The church is intended to be the servant of the community. The better it is, the older it is, so much the more courteous, so much the more humble, so

much the more generous must it be in all its words and deeds. Even a life insurance company has no right to serve itself, how much less a church!

These two temptations,—to care more for a beautiful service than for an honest life, and to exalt the interests of the church above the interests of the town, are simply the natural diseases of organization. In one way or another, they attack almost every form of human society. They are found in religion because even religious people are no more than human beings. They result in superstition, in arrogance, and in narrowness of mind. Sometimes this is so obtrusive and obnoxious that a Christian man may stay away from it for the sake of protest. A church which is not helping men and women to be better, and which is taking no part in the good life of the town, has no rightful claim on our allegiance.

But such a church is very rarely found, I hope. Sometimes when it is found, an earnest man can change it. For while it is true that the church has again and again fallen ill with the diseases which beset organization, it is also true that it has always recovered from them. The Kingdom of God possesses a power of recuperation which recalls the promise that even the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

When our Lord took this ancient title, "The Kingdom of God," and made it the theme of His continual preaching, He had in mind, no doubt, the whole wide field of human betterment, beginning here and going on into the life to come. It is impossible to confine it to the church, and grotesque to confine it to any particular branch of the church. So far as organization entered in any detail into His ordering of human life it was of the simplest kind, and drawn in a way which left men perfectly free. There was an elaborate organization already in existence. There was a church established upon the foundation of the Old Testament. If ever a society had a right to call itself the Church, with the article in italics and the noun in capitals, that was the one. But between the Church and Him there was a condition of frank hostility which ended at last in His death upon the cross. The Church persecuted Him during all His ministry and at last crucified Him. When, therefore, in the face of this tragic failure of the ecclesiastical institution, He still preached the gospel of the Kingdom, and as a preparation for that Kingdom founded a society, not indeed, on the foundation of the priests, but on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, He Himself being the chief corner stone, He asserted the

importance of the principle of organization. He taught us to pray, "Thy Kingdom come," and He defined one aspect of the Kingdom when He taught us to add the petition, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Wherever the will of God is done, there the Kingdom of God has come in power. But the way to it, the help for it, the guidance and the strength whereby to attain it, is in the Church. It is in that organization where His word is preached and His sacraments are administered in such a manner as to set God's kingdom forward in the soul of man, and in the community of men. There is the Church. Its attestation is not in any page of ancient history, nor in any proof of academic theory, but in the manifestation of the spirit and of power.

No man ought to be content until he has found the Kingdom of God. Christ said once to a good man, "Thou art not far from the Kingdom of God." That is true to-day of many a good man who stands outside of the organization of religion. But that is not enough. To find the church which helps,—and which is the church indeed for him whom it does help, because it helps him,—and into this church to enter freely and fully, taking and giving, and growing in the warmth and light of it, thus shall a man satisfy the in-

stincts of his soul. Thus shall he begin to understand what the Lord meant when He preached the glad tidings of the Kingdom of God.

THE BREAD OF LIFE

I am that bread of life.—*John* 6 : 48.

I AM considering in these sermons five discourses of our Lord: What He said in the synagogue at Nazareth, and then on the mount, and then by the side of the sea, after that in the synagogue of Capernaum, and finally as He looked out over Jerusalem, a few days before He was crucified. It is reasonable to look in such utterances as these for the essential truths of His teaching. Thus we found in the first sermon that He put the emphasis on His own personality, and asked acceptance not only for His truth but for Himself. In the second sermon He put the emphasis on character, making that the fruit and test of right religion. In the third sermon, He set forth one of the aids to character. This life, He said, is maintained in the individual and furthered in society by organization, by following the leadings of the social instinct, resulting in the Church.

I spoke, accordingly, of the helpfulness of the Church, and of the reasonable duty of every man to make use of its privileges for his

own and the general good. The Kingdom of God, of which our Lord was speaking, means much more than the Church. Its wide horizon encircles the whole of life, here and hereafter. The Church is but a detail. At the same time, it is for us so important a detail, and touches our common life so closely, that it is actually for us the Kingdom of God on its nearer side. Thus much we can touch and understand. The first note of the Christian religion is Christ Himself: He bids us think of Him, and give to Him our obedience and our worship. The second note of the Christian religion is the Christian man; of what sort is he, what life shall he live? The third note and the fourth bring these two together. How shall the Christian man approach Christ? How shall he grow towards the measure of His stature? Partly, our Lord says, by the Church, by fraternity in the Kingdom of God; and partly, He says in the sermon to which we come to-day, by the sacraments, by the impartation of strength from heaven.

For I purpose to deal with the discourse of the Bread of Life as I dealt with the discourse of the Kingdom of God, and choose out one detail for emphasis. This sermon in the Capernaum synagogue is filled full of profound spiritual instruction. It reaches out again

and touches the whole of life: that was our Lord's way. There are texts here for a thousand sermons. Out of them I select this one, which seems to me to touch the heart of them all, and to contain a truth which is distinctive and characteristic. The words declare the doctrine of grace.

Our Lord was not speaking of the Holy Communion. That came long after. Nevertheless, when He took bread and brake it on the night in which He was betrayed, and gave it to them to eat, saying, "This is My body," their memory must have gone back to this mysterious sentence. The association of the sentence and the sacrament in our service is perfectly natural. "That He may dwell in us," we pray, "and we in Him": the words are taken from this sermon. Christ as the Bread of Life is indeed the sustainer of all spiritual strength, and in all manner of ways. The fathers were wise who found sacraments on every hand. Two were not enough for them, nor seven, nor seventy times seven. All life, they said, is sacramental. We feed on Christ whenever in any way, by any experience, we draw near to Him and He to us. The vigorous metaphor of eating flesh and drinking blood was the symbol of the most intimate relationship. It was made vigorous that it might be remembered.

It was, indeed, immediately misunderstood. "How," they said, "can this man give us his flesh to eat?" It is widely misunderstood to this hour. People are taught, and have been taught for ages, that Christ does give us His flesh to eat. This, however, is but another illustration of our inveterate habit of making prose out of poetry, and of reducing everything to the uniform proportion of literal commonplace. The words of the Master are like trees growing in the green woods, rooted in the earth, fed by rains and springs, shining in the sun, pulsing with mysterious life. Then one comes and fells the tree, transports it to the mill, puts it under the saw, changes it into dead boards, and makes out of it a floor to walk on, or a chair to sit on. It is the difference between the four gospels and the Thirty-nine Articles. "I am the Bread of Life," He says; "whoso eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood hath eternal life." "But how," they say, "can this man give us His flesh to eat?" to which He answers, "The flesh profiteth nothing." Can you not see that I am not speaking of physical things? "The words which I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life." I am telling you of heavenly things.

That is, our Lord's words here, as in all His

utterances, are too large and high to be brought within the compass of any formula. Even the sacraments cannot contain them. Men have truly eaten the flesh of Christ and drunk His blood who have turned away from all the sacraments. The monks who went away to dwell with God in the wilderness, the mystics of all time, the Quakers looking for the light invisible and listening to the voice inaudible, these have found Him in valid and precious sacraments such as need no liturgy, no altar, and no priest.

This is the background of the text, all this wide application of it to universal life; but for us at this moment in the foreground is the Holy Communion. This is the detail which we purpose to consider. Christ feeds us with the bread of heaven in the Holy Communion. The Holy Communion teaches in a graphic way the great lesson which the sermon on the Bread of Life was meant to teach. I mean the necessity of supernatural assistance. "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, ye have no life in you." That is, the spiritual life, like the physical life, must be ministered unto from without. It must be nourished and strengthened. The soul needs God, as the body needs food. So Christ said, putting it again in His exceedingly strong

way, "Without Me ye can do nothing." To which St. Paul answers, and with him all the saints both great and small, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." This is the doctrine of grace. Here the sermon and the sacrament join their voices in the assurance that in order to be and to do what we ought as Christian people we need help from on high.

I would here insist again upon the naturalness of the supernatural. I would disclaim any sacramental theory which regards grace as something mechanical or artificial, something which can somehow be mysteriously infused into consecrated bread. There it is, said Luther, as heat is in hot iron. No; there it is as the soul of the writer is in the words of the letter, a real presence, vital and life-giving, but utterly remote from all dimensions of length or breadth, totally removed from all chemical analysis, indefinable, spiritual, a communication between the heart of God and the soul of man. We need it as we need the letter; the bread and wine have their homely but necessary place in it like ink and paper; we read the letter and are filled with joy and satisfaction, we eat this bread and drink this wine and Christ dwells in our hearts, so that we are made strong against temptation, and go away happy

and content. Kneeling here, God deals with our souls, if we will let Him, ministers to us, enriches and deepens our spiritual life. This is not a theory; it is the fact which all the theories have endeavored to explain. This is what actually happens in human experience. If you have never tried it, you know no more about it than of the flavor of a fruit which you have never tasted. They who come here week by week, presenting themselves before God, and calling on Him who is the Bread of Life, are manifestly blessed. They go away refreshed and grateful.

When we subject this experience to examination, asking how is it that the sacrament does this, and is a means of grace, we get several satisfactory answers.

The Holy Communion is a means of grace because it is an act of remembrance. The most obvious sacramental fact is personality. I mean that in no way does God so minister grace to men as in the inspiring examples set them by their fellow men. The hero makes even the small man heroic; the saint by the fact of his existence affects and sometimes converts the sinner. The bodily presence of a great man is an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace.

But in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper

we are made to remember Him who is the heart of all heroism and the soul of all sanctity. Especially, we are reminded of Him in that aspect of His life which is of all others most appealing. We remember how He gave Himself for us men and for our salvation, even to the death upon the cross. The hero as he walks across the street may impress our imagination, the saint as he says his prayers may attract our reverence, but when the hero comes walking or running across the street to our aid in peril, when the saint hastens to our assistance as we are beset with evil and gets us out and away, especially when the saint or the hero puts himself to pain to do this for us, then our relation to him passes from admiration to affection. Then we give him not only our respect but our allegiance. At that moment he not only touches our life but transforms it. And thus it is that we remember Christ in this sacrament. He suffered,—He the Supreme Son of Man, the Son of God, for our sake came down here where we live, and that we might be turned from bad to good, died on the cross. To remember that is of itself a means of grace.

The sacrament is in a second way a means of grace because it is an act of introspection and of resolution. The service turns our eyes

upon ourselves. The initial exhortation bids us beware lest we come unworthily, and instructs us that in order to come as we ought we must be honestly sorry for our sins past, and steadfastly purposed to lead a better life, and must be in charity with our neighbors, and be filled with gratitude to God. Then we consider in the silences of the service, as we have previously considered in our preparation for it, whether all these high things are true of us or not. And presently the confession comes and down we go upon our knees and say that we are not worthy; no, not so much as to gather up the crumbs under God's table. And then, if we are honest persons, having a serious mind, thus perceiving what we are, we resolve that we will be that no longer, thus and thus will we amend our lives.

There was a time when people were too introspective, when they were forever plucking up the young plants of conduct to see if they were growing. But nowadays we are not introspective enough. We go hurrying along through the crowded weeks, tremendously busy gaining the whole world, but often ignorant of the condition of our soul. In the midst of these affairs, what sort of folk are we in the sight of God? That is as important for us to know as for a merchant to know the

condition of his business. The sacrament is our opportunity to do that thing. Here we stop and question our soul. To do that in any real way is a means of grace.

The sacrament is, also, in a third aspect of it, a means of grace because it is an act of worship. It is a time not only for the remembrance of what Jesus Christ did a long while ago, and for the renewal of our spiritual living by introspection and by resolution, but it is also a time in which we sinners bow down in adoration before Him who not only saved us but now lives to bless us. Here we come in adoration. Here we say, "Thou, God, art beside me, touching me with Thy hand invisible; Thou who hast made me, and redeemed me, my Father, my God and my strong salvation. I go about unconscious of Thee, having a dull soul; but now, O Eternal, I perceive Thee; now I lay hold of Thee, as the patriarch held the spirit in the desert; bless me, O Father; dwell within me indeed, and let me dwell with Thee forever."

It is for our best good that the sacrament is a familiar, frequent service, instead of being kept in awe for special seasons. Because it thus helps us to get rid of the heresy which finds God only in the unusual, confines Him to the diminishing area of the miraculous, and

makes a distinction between providence and nature. There is as much of God in the daily appearance of the sun as there would have been had He in fact stopped the machinery of all the cosmic universe at the call of an eager captain busy with the killing of Canaanites. Nature is not set between God and us, the natural is not essentially different from the supernatural, the world is the garment of God and whatever moves in it is moved by Him. The familiar sacrament is thus akin to the familiar day. Here in an hour of quiet we see God face to face that we may go out not as those who leave Him behind them in the church, but as those to whom all life has been interpreted anew, and who as they go hold the hand of God. In the sacrament we deepen our consciousness of God. To do that is a means of grace.

The Holy Communion, then, is a means of grace; it is not a social feast to which they only may come who have received a formal invitation. It is not to be confused with the customs of our social clubs. It is to be likened not to a public dinner to which each guest brings his card of identification and finds his place reserved at the table, but to the prodigality of the harvest, to earth and air and streams of water intended for the maintenance

of men. It is not a badge but a blessing. Here let the hungry come and eat; here let the thirsty come and drink. Here let all who desire grace come and receive it. It is the possession of no religious society. It is the Lord's table, and to it are to be admitted the Lord's children.

What shall be said, then, concerning this sentence at the end of the confirmation office: "There shall none be admitted to the Holy Communion, until such time as he be confirmed, or be ready and desirous to be confirmed."

The first thing to be said is that this sentence is connected with confirmation, and only indirectly with the Holy Communion. There are certain offenses for which persons are to be forbidden the means of grace. They are set down at the beginning of the communion service. Open and notorious evil-livers and persons who hate their neighbors may not come, unless they are repentant. There is no mention made among those sinners of the unconfirmed. On the contrary, the communion service puts into the lips of the minister an invitation which is such as should be given to the sacrament of the Bread of Life, to the feast of grace. "Ye who do truly and earnestly repent you of your sins," thus it be-

gins, "and are in love and charity with your neighbors"—these are moral and spiritual qualifications—"draw near." But blessing depends on preparation. The Christian church has always made much of religious instruction. People are first to be catechumens, then communicants. And one stage is normally closed and the other entered by way of confirmation. The rubric was put in the book to prevent the disuse of confirmation. It was intended, we may say, to keep young persons from going from the grammar school of religion to the college without passing an entrance examination; between the Sunday-school and the church was put this test of fitness.

But the entrance examination is no bar against academic hospitality. It does indeed stand in the way of formal entrance into the college, but it does not forbid a student to bring a friend with him to a lecture. Neither is confirmation a hindrance to ecclesiastical hospitality. Without it nobody may be "admitted," as the rubric says, to the Holy Communion; that is, nobody's name may be entered on the communicant list of the parish until he has been confirmed. But this does not forbid us to bring our friends to this feast of the divine friendship. They do not ask to

be "admitted to the Holy Communion"; they come as guests, to whom we give all gracious hospitality. With our domestic regulations they are not concerned.

Indeed, the matter is settled for all who find guidance in the voice of the Church. It came up definitely in 1870, when Dean Stanley invited the revisers of the New Testament to join in the Holy Communion in Westminster Abbey. There was a protest made by some sensitive souls, and the matter was referred to the highest Anglican authority, the Archbishop of Canterbury. He ruled that this rubric applies "solely to our own people, and not to those members of foreign or dissenting bodies who occasionally conform." "The Church," he said, "places no bar against occasional conformity."

Thus, from the point of view both of Christian common sense and of ecclesiastical order, both as question of courtesy and as a question of authority, the position of the Church in this matter is plain enough. Any departure from it, any adverse ruling in an individual parish, is an act of private judgment which has no sanction from the Church. The Church has never excommunicated the Congregationalists, or the Methodists, or the Baptists, either collectively or as individuals. All Christian

people, our brethren in the family of God, are welcome to the table of the Lord.

The important thing is, not how to keep good people from coming to the Holy Communion, but how to bring them to it. In this world, wherein we all suffer temptation, and wherein we are all in need of spiritual help, here is help indeed. Whoever is weak and would be strong, whoever is weary and would find rest, or sad and in search of comfort, or charged with responsibility and in need of guidance, whoever would like a new life, keeping God's commandments better, he is bidden. Here he may come and find satisfaction. Here is the feast of God, here is the means of grace, here is the Bread of Life.

THE DAY OF JUDGMENT

When the Son of Man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory. And before Him shall be gathered all nations: and He shall separate them one from another as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats.—*Matt.* 25 : 31, 32.

THE last sermon of our Lord was spoken in the fading light of the setting sun. It was in the evening of the Tuesday or Wednesday of what we call the "Holy Week." All day He had been teaching in the Temple in the face of hostility. It was plain to Him, remembering the fate of a hundred prophets, that He was already walking in the valley of the shadow of death. He knew that the time of the supreme tragedy drew near. Thus, at the end of the day, He sat with the disciples on the Mount of Olives, looking across the deep valley upon the great buildings of the temple. Beyond, in the west, the sky was still shining as He began to speak, radiant at first with the colors of the sunset, then slowly fading and paling, passing from gold to gray, until, as He came to the end of His discourse, night had closed in about Him.

The disciples had given Him His text by

calling His attention to the huge stones of the temple. "See, Master," they said, "what manner of stones and what buildings are here!" to which He answered, "Seest thou these great buildings? There shall not be left one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down." Thus He began, speaking of the inevitable destruction of Jerusalem, and passing thence, so gradually that the point of transition is hard to find, to the end of the world, and the coming of the Son of Man, and the final judgment of the race, and the life of the eternal age beyond. There they sat about Him, listening, with that sense of confidential intimacy, that quietness of spirit, and that quickening of the imagination which deepen the impression of words spoken in the dark. The vast structures across the valley had changed to uncertain shadows, mingling with the shapes of the clouds. Nothing was clear except the faint light of the stars, fading in its turn before the dawn of the Paschal moon.

The situation fitted the sermon like an accompaniment of music. The disciples, as they saw the world pass from substance into shadow, found it easy to believe that first Jerusalem and then the planet itself should similarly fade away. "Heaven and earth shall pass away,"

so He said as night came on, "but My words shall never pass away." There, amidst impending and universal change, in the midst of the transitoriness of all things,—there was abiding and unchanging and eternal certainty. They felt like men out of their depth in the cold sea, beaten by wind and wave, hurled this way and that, and ready to drown, who suddenly touch bottom, find themselves within their depth, stand firm on the saving earth, and thank God.

I dwell upon these particulars of place and time because they not only serve to bring us into the company of those who sat thus with the Master in the deepening darkness, but they illustrate what He said. In some measure, they help us to understand it. The situation represents the sermon. Here is much that is dark, into which we look and see only dim, portentous shadows, so that we are perplexed and troubled; but in this darkness are faint lights, indications of a dawn, and at last enough clear shining to enable us to see our way.

The first difficulty of the sermon is in the intermingling of the destruction of Jerusalem with the destruction of the planet, as if we had here a discourse imperfectly remembered, with the transitions lost, hopelessly confused in

the report. Now He is speaking of the city: "When ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh." But in the next breath He is speaking of the universe: "The sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars of heaven shall fall." And presently all of this tragic consummation, for the people of Palestine and for the people of the planet, is dated in the immediate future: "Verily, I say unto you, that this generation shall not pass away, till all these things be done." In spite of which, here we are almost a score of centuries after, going about upon an earth which still seems solid, whose sun and moon and stars still give their light, where all things continue as they were from the foundation of the world and seem likely to continue into indefinite ages to come.

The second difficulty of the sermon is in the setting of these final cosmic scenes. "They shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory. And He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds. . . . Then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory, and before Him shall be gathered all nations; and He shall separate them one from another, as a

shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats. . . . Then shall He say unto them on the left hand, Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire." These dramatic representations of the winding up of our planetary affairs are not in accord with our present understanding of the conditions of time and space. We try in vain to visualize them, and to get them definitely upon the map. It is true that St. Paul found them easy and natural. "The Lord Himself," he says, "shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air." But this comment only makes the difficult more difficult. This blowing of a celestial trumpet whose blare smites the ears of all who dwell on the round earth, this appearance of Christ in the damp clouds, this catching up of ourselves and our neighbors into the sky, this general assembly of all souls before Christ sitting visibly on an uplifted throne, this material fire awaiting the wicked,—somehow we cannot make any of this seem real.

The truth is that both of these difficulties,—that of the immediate advent and that of the

trumpet and the throne,—are the result of a conscientious but entirely hopeless endeavor to make prose out of poetry. They have their existence not so much in our Lord's sermon as in our interpretation of it. They belong to that great company of errors, past and present, which have arisen from the assumption that our Lord meant exactly what He said. No: He was dealing with high matters for which our ordinary vocabulary is inadequate. He was speaking truth which passes experience, but which He nevertheless intended to be the possession of all men to all time. These two qualities of His speech, the transcendence and the universality of His truth, demanded a symbolic utterance.

What I mean is this: there are ideas of beauty which evade definition. They can never be put into permanent or adequate expression. They must be uttered in symbol; that is, by a statue or a picture or a poem. These go on from one generation to another, speaking a universal speech, interpreted by each age in its own language, appealing to every man in his own way. They exceed and outlive all philosophies, and are still potent when the artists who made them and the artists who have explained them are forgotten together. There is still the statue or the picture or the poem, tell-

ing its universal and eternal truth. Is it not plain that between a sentence which means exactly what the speaker says and a symbol which means much more than any speaker can ever say, there is a difference like that between earth and heaven?

That which holds in the realm of beauty holds also in the realm of religion. And the fact explains our Lord's method both in this sermon and in much of His other teaching. His sentences are symbols: that is, they are of the nature of art and poetry. They are pictures, with the mystery of the great picture, in which the longer we look the more we see; and with the appeal of the great picture, which teaches men of all sorts and conditions, wise and unwise, each in his own way, and in all lands and times. The day of judgment has entered into our common human consciousness, and has vitally affected our thinking and living, because our Lord set it forth by means of mysterious symbols; He put it in a picture. The sun and the moon are turning black, like burned out fires; the stars are falling; the thrones are set and the books are opened, and an innumerable company of all nations and languages and tongues stand waiting for the word of final destiny, and in the background glow the awful fires of endless punishment.

And underneath is written, "Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of Man cometh."

Taking the sermon, then, not as prose but as poetry, looking in it not for statistics but for symbols, this discourse of the day of judgment makes three great assertions.

The first assertion concerns the personality of Christ. It repeats the central meaning of His first sermon, in the Nazareth synagogue.

The Son of Man, He says, shall come in His glory, and take His seat upon the throne from which proceeds the government of both earth and heaven. He shall be exalted far above all principalities and powers. Who is this Son of Man? It is Himself, who said at the beginning, "the Spirit of the Lord is upon Me," who said again, "he that believeth in Me hath eternal life," who persistently centred His teaching about His own personality, requiring men to believe not only in the truth which He taught but in Him as the truth itself. Here He lays hold upon the largest and highest Messianic expectation, upon the supreme hope of His people, and declares that it is all fulfilled in Him. Think of it! A group of peasants and fishermen out of the country, sit in the twilight on the side of the hill towards Jerusalem. With the fresh interests of men accustomed to

the fields, they express their admiration of the substantial glories of the splendid city. Look, how wonderful it is. But one of them says, "Yes, but it will all be thrown down, one of these days, and everything else after it, even the earth itself; and in that day you will see Me sitting in the throne of God and judging all the countless nations of the dead. Some I shall set on one side for punishment; others on the other side I shall admit to life eternal." Imagine yourself sitting there in the twilight, hearing that quiet voice saying such amazing things. Thus the last sermon and the first meet in this expression of the divine personality of Jesus Christ.

The second assertion concerns the preeminence of character. This was the distinctive thought of His second sermon. Not only does our Lord emphasize His own personality, as He did at Nazareth, but He insists as He did in the Sermon on the Mount on the supreme value of character. There is no repetition of either the third sermon or the fourth. Christ says nothing now concerning either the church or the sacraments. Because these are means rather than ends; they are methods, not attainments. They are properly included under character, as helps to holy living. When the Day of Judgment comes, the test which is

then applied has nothing to do with either means or methods; nobody is asked if he belonged to the church, still less is inquiry made as to the kind of church; nothing is said about the communion. The time for all that is past. Men stand just as they are, before the final judge, and He judges them simply by looking at them. He sees what they are, and that sight is enough. Whether in coming into this condition they used or neglected the means of grace is of no importance at the Day of Judgment. There they are, the result of the kind of life they lived. And what is the result? It is measured here as in the Sermon on the Mount in terms of character.

To what was there said of character this sermon adds two particulars: Christian goodness is both positive and social. It is positive in that it requires the performance of definite good deeds. The fact that one does nothing bad will not avail. They who are set on the left hand are not accused of any actual transgression. All that is said of them is that they had a great many chances to be helpful and did not avail themselves of them. They are condemned for the things which they did not do. Christian goodness is also social, in that it finds its immediate opportunity in the needs of a neighbor. The Day of Judgment

standard of righteousness calls for good husbands and fathers, for good wives and mothers, for good friends, for good citizens and neighbors. Of such is the kingdom of heaven.

It is to be noted also that this homely excellence, thus sublimely rewarded, is of an uncounted and unconscious kind. They who have it are surprised at a praise which they had never thought of, and feel that there must be some mistake about it. They speak up humbly and honestly, before they go to take their unexpected places on the right hand, and say, "Lord, when did we ever do these high things for which you give us credit?" To which He answers, "You did your nearest duty; you ministered faithfully in the common service of human friendships; you were kind; you were pleasant to live with; you increased in a hundred quiet ways the happiness of life." And these unassuming persons, who have been ministers of joy, enter fitly into joy eternal.

These two assertions of our Lord's last sermon thus repeat what we have found already to be His distinctive and characteristic teachings. These things He came to say: first, that He Himself is the heart of His religion; secondly, that character is the fruit and test of His religion. To these assertions, this last ser-

mon adds a third, saying that this life goes on after death into life eternal.

However much we may understand or fail to understand about the Day of Judgment this at least is plain: that all this elaborate and mysterious preparation, this coming of the Son of Man, this final trial of the race of men, is meant to introduce us into another and larger region, wherein space and time have no horizon. The judgment has no meaning unless it is followed by reward and punishment; and these belong to the life of which death is the beginning.

It is also plain that statements such as these are beyond the verification of experience. They are not subject to demonstration. They cannot be proved, as problems in chemistry are proved. They rest either upon reason or upon recognition. I mean that they are either the results of a series of arguments, whereby, making our way from the known to the unknown, we reach a place of substantial certainty; or else they are the results of a process immediate and indefinable, of a sense of imperative fitness, of such a perception as that whereby we distinguish good from bad; laying hold of eternal life by a kind of instinct, by an intellectual necessity such as that which leads us from the fact of the finite to the fact of the infinite, or

by a spiritual necessity such as that which assures us of the reality of this life present. By these two paths, by reason or by recognition, men have come in sight of life eternal.

But while it is true that some are satisfied with the reply of reason, and some are content with the reply of recognition, the fact remains that a great number of persons are not equal to either of these adventurous journeys. For they who are able to reason validly are few; and they are fewer still whose souls are so sensitive that they perceive where others do but guess. Thus far the certainty of life eternal is reserved for saints and scholars. What shall we do who are neither saints nor scholars? Tell me, we cry, what is the truth about it? I cannot think aright: I cannot feel. What is the answer? Is there, or is there not, a life to come? The path of reason is uncertain; the path of recognition we cannot find; is there no way for such as us?

Yes; we may simply take the word of Him who said, "I am the way." On we go over the journey of our life, confident that the road comes out somewhere into a better land than this: because He who guides us says so. Is not that what a guide is for? If we know the way we do not need a guide; we ask his help

because he knows; thus we follow on behind him. We are sure that the dim path will take us out of the wilderness because we are sure of him. That is what Christ does in this last sermon, as in all His sermons. He speaks the words of life eternal, and we know that there is a life eternal because He knows. The supreme spiritual master, the Son of Man, the Son of God, delivers us, if we will, out of all perplexity. Death, He says, is but the door of life. The other world? It is My Father's house. It is the place of eternal hospitality. Beyond the grave and gate of death, beyond the Day of Judgment, is the blessed land of life everlasting.

Get your illustration from this

THE ATONEMENT

The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin.—1 *John* 1 : 7.

THE last word comes first. The first thing is sin. This is the order of time: first sin, then salvation out of it. This is also the order of understanding: first the realization of sin, then the desire to be saved. These two facts —of sin and of salvation,—are at the heart of these words.

The first thing is sin. We are not sufficiently conscious of it. We do not perceive it with sufficient plainness as an individual quality, a personal reproach, something which is actually and acutely the matter with us. When we say the proper words of the appointed confessions, and declare that "we are heartily sorry for these our misdoings; the remembrance of them is grievous unto us; the burden of them is intolerable,"—are we honest with God? Is that a true expression of our real feeling? I am afraid not. I am afraid that the words exceed our genuine emotions, and represent an ideal of penitence which is very remote from us. Even the petitions of the

litany suggest a mental reservation, and we question whether after all we are such "miserable sinners" as we say we are. St. Paul called himself the chief of sinners, and was in fear lest having preached to others he himself might be a castaway. Again and again he is heard crying, "Miserable man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" It seems unreal to us. Is not that the truth about it? We look with perplexity at that good man, and wonder how he could have talked that way. It does not touch an answering chord in our experience. If it does, thank God! But does it?

No; the honest truth is that most of us have an excellent opinion of ourselves. So had the scribes and pharisees. So had all that company of excellent, well-behaved, even pious persons who took their great parts in the tragedy of the cross. Everybody praised them; all the reputable opinion of their day approved them; and they believed in their souls that everybody was right. They had no consciousness of sin. Let us say it over to ourselves. They who brought Jesus Christ to the death of the cross were eminently respectable people, church members; some of them were ministers. They said their prayers several times every day, and never missed a service. And they killed Jesus

Christ. They crucified the Lord of life. They came out of church and did it, and then went back with a good conscience and a sense of righteous satisfaction and thanked God: thanked God that they had killed His Son. Let us say this over to ourselves lest we should imagine, as they did, that because we have only a vague consciousness of sin therefore we are not sinners.

The truth is that to have but a vague consciousness of sin is in itself an evidence of sin. The best people have always been most keenly aware of their own shortcomings. Our Lord's unconsciousness of any taint of sin is so extraordinary a circumstance, and contradicts so flatly the entire experience of the saints, that it is one of the manifestations of His divinity. It is a psychological fact that sanctity and the sense of sin go invariably together. When the room is dark the disorder of it is out of sight; it is there, but nobody perceives it. When the shutters are opened, and more and more the light streams in, whatever disorder there is becomes evident. Even the dust is discovered. They who lack the consciousness of sin lack the illumination of a high ideal. The trouble with them is that they have not light enough to see by.

Of course, when I speak thus of a high ideal,

I mean a high spiritual ideal: a clear sense of what is right towards God and towards man. The consciousness of sin is like the consciousness of ignorance. Intellectual self-conceit grows always in the shallow soil of superficial knowledge. The great scholar is always modest, always honestly humble; because he knows enough to know how little he knows. He has caught sight of the far horizon of truth. It is the superficial scholar who thinks that he knows it all. So it is with spiritual complacency. People are contented with themselves, because they have not begun to understand what they ought to be.

The Christian religion means one thing or another according to our consciousness of sin. That is what Jesus said when He stood between the pharisee and the sinner: on the one side the rich, respectable pharisee, an eminent citizen, a good churchman, who lived handsomely beside a pleasant street, a person quite of our kind, with whom we would no doubt have been acquainted had we lived in his time in that town; on the other side a woman, of whom the less said the better,—except that she had somehow become aware of her sins, and was profoundly sorry for them, and by the blessed hand of the Master had been helped out of them. And she loved Him much, while

the excellent, irreproachable pharisee loved Him not at all. They were both of them sinners; the difference was that she knew that she was a sinner, while he never dreamed that anybody could say that about him; and the result of the difference was that the woman was very near to Christ,—very near to the "friend of sinners"—while the man stood afar off, at a vast distance. It is better to be a sinner, and know it, and be trying by the help of Jesus Christ to be better, than to be a perfectly respectable person and be satisfied. Satisfaction and salvation do not belong together; at least, in that order. I hope that the saved will be abundantly satisfied; but I do not see how the satisfied can be saved. The meaning of the Holy Week, the meaning of the cross which stands in the midst of it, the meaning of the life and death of Him who hung thereon, depends upon our consciousness of sin. If we are sinners, it means much: it means blessing and redemption; it means safety and peace; it means the love of God which passeth knowledge, the love which He revealed when He gave His Son to die for our sins.

We are all sinners. We are all included under sin. There is none righteous; no, not one. What shall we do, then? How shall we escape out of this bondage? How shall

we attain salvation? By effort; by individual, determined effort; making up our minds to it, applying our wills to it, fighting our way out. And by environment: getting out of the company of worse sinners than ourselves, out of the reach, so far as possible, of the allurements of temptation, into a surrounding of goodness, into the elevating influences of a wholesome public opinion, into the helpful atmosphere of an expectation of righteousness, where people will expect us to do good rather than ill. By effort and by environment we shall be saved.

This is the answer of reason and of ethics. It is also the answer of the book of Proverbs, and, to an extent, of experience. We all know how much this helps: how much and how little. It must enter into the true answer, and make a part of it: that is plain. But it is not itself the answer which we need. It is not the answer of the gospels. We shall be saved, the text says, by the cross, by the blood of Christ. The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin. And that is written up and down the page all through the New Testament. That is the answer of religion to the cry of the sinner. We are saved by the death of Jesus Christ, by the tragedy which makes us call this week the Holy Week.

The theologians have endeavored to explain it. At first, in the early centuries of Christian history, they said that the blood of Jesus Christ saves us because His death was a ransom paid to the devil for our souls. The devil, by reason of our sins, had come into possession of our souls. We were his slaves. God proposed to the devil to exchange all these poor souls of ours for the one precious, divine soul of His own Son. The devil accepted the offer, and the death of Christ was the result. And then the stupid devil was outwitted. By the resurrection, the soul of Christ overcame death, escaped out of the keeping of the devil, and having released us released Himself also.

Then they said, when it was found no longer possible to maintain such an explanation, that the death of Christ was offered not to the devil but to God. Sin, they said, is an offense against the majesty of God and must be punished. But since the offense is against an infinite being it must meet an infinite punishment; either by the infinite suffering of a finite being, that is, by endless torture in hell; or by the finite suffering of an infinite being, that is, by the cross. Thus the cross saves us from our sins.

And after that, were other explanations, as difficult and as unsatisfying, each in turn

dominating Christian thought for a long time, and during that time made the test of orthodoxy, and then abandoned.

All these theories had two radical and fatal defects. One was that they dealt with the punishment of sin. But the New Testament deals with sin. The message of the Christian gospel is not that by the death of Christ we may escape the penalty of our offenses, but that by His death we may cease from our offending. Thus it reads from first to last. "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world"; the sin, not the penalty of sin. The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin. Here and now, in the midst of this present life, in the face of our manifold temptation, the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin.

The other error was a mistake as to the nature of sin. Sin is not something which we carry about on our shoulders, or which is charged to us in an account. It is a personal quality. It is a part of us. It is a defect in our character. It can be taken away only by affecting, strengthening and improving *ourselves.* It is like a disease, which is in no way touched by any bargain which is made outside of us. It is expelled by ministering to us, so that we ourselves may be enabled to conquer

it. There can be no salvation which does not include the will of the sinner. He must himself coöperate. He must experience a change of heart. The death of Christ may or may not have been for the sake of the devil or to satisfy the wrath or the justice of God: it is plain that it was for the sake of man. Christ died that thereby He might win the will of us sinful men. Whether or not, as the scholars said, the cross reconciled God to us, it certainly reconciled us to God. It could not have been available for salvation without that.

The death of Christ saves us from our sins because it was the offering of that life, thus completed, whereby all our life is uplifted, inspired, helped, strengthened, assisted out of sin, changed into sonship; and because it was the manifestation at the same time of the love of God and of the sinfulness of sin. Thereby we are taught, so that we may all read and understand, what a grievous matter sin is, so grievous that God in His great love gave His own Son, gave His own self, to suffer by reason of it. The tragedy of this week means that sin is a tragic matter, so that it hurts the heart of God. It drives a nail into the blessed, outstretched hands of Jesus Christ.

It is the simple truth, verified by long and wide experience, that no fact in God's deal-

ings with man has done so much to strengthen human nature against temptation, to help sinners into a right life, to bring God and man together, and thus effect an atonement—an at-one-ment,—between the human and the divine, between earth and heaven, as this fact which we recite in the creed, and commemorate on Good Friday, and in the Holy Communion and symbolize by the cross on the altar, the fact of the death of Jesus Christ. It has never been satisfactorily brought within the terms of any philosophy, or stated in any formula; but there it is, shining as the sun shines in the face of all our theories of the universe. The sun warmed Ptolemy and Copernicus alike, though they had very different notions about it. The death of Christ saved Abelard who denied that it was a ransom offered to the devil, and it saved Bernard who insisted that a man who disputed a doctrine so essential "should not be reasoned with but chastised with rods." The history of the doctrine of the atonement confounds the brethren who would maintain that "fixity of interpretation is of the essence of the creeds." But no differences of opinion have touched the fundamental fact that Christ was "crucified for us"; He was "made sin for us"; He "put away sin" by the sacrifice of Himself; He

"bore our sins in His own body on the tree"; He "gave His life a ransom for many"; He "hath reconciled us to God by His own blood"; He is "the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world"; as He said Himself,—"This is My body which is given for you, This is My blood which is shed for you and for many for the remission of sins."

When we say that the death of Christ saves us because it manifests the love of God and the hatefulness of sin, even here we do but touch a side of the illimitable truth. We do not explain that black moment of abandonment on the cross, when He cried, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" We do not explain the deep mystery of the words of the prophet: "He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows. He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." We do not explain it. But we are saved. That is the essential thing. God for Christ's sake has forgiven our offenses, and opened wide the door of everlasting life to all who repent and believe.

"I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me." This He spake, signifying what death He should die. And we answer, "O Thou, who by Thy cross and precious blood hast redeemed us, save us and help us, we humbly beseech Thee, O Lord."

L.A.P.
1913

THE LIFE EVERLASTING

And in the world to come, life everlasting.—*Luke* 18 : 30.

THE strongest argument against the doctrine of the immortality of the soul is the fact of the death of the body. There it is; plain beyond denial or evasion. The body dies. And, so far as any of our senses can assure us, that is the end; positively the end. There is no more voice, nor sight, nor sign. We cry and there is no answer.

It is true that there are strange tales told of some who have had a consciousness of the presence of a departed soul so clear and convincing that for them faith has passed into experience. But such persons are few, and their conviction does not persuade others. So far as we personally know, so far as the crises of our own lives teach, the dead are dead, hopelessly and everlastingly dead. How can we know more? Is it not according to the nature of things that the assertion of the life to come is beyond the range of either proof or disproof? It is altogether out of the reach of demonstration.

Let us stop here for a moment by the way to

consider these two difficulties: first, that the world to come lacks the testimony of our senses; and second, that the world to come lacks the demonstration of our reason.

We have five senses: that is all. They may be numbered on the fingers of one hand. Thus equipped,—thus modestly, even meagrely furnished,—we look about us in the midst of a universe which is immeasureably and inconceivably great. Do our five senses take it all in? Shall our self-conceit extend as far as that? Shall we seriously maintain that whatever we know not is not knowledge? It is not knowledge for us, but does that fact make it impossible? This is the manner of reasoning which they used to parody by imagining the reflections of an ant, sitting at the door of his hill and contemplating the universe. The human mind is very wonderful, but that it is the measure of all being is absurd. The five senses minister to it with unceasing diligence, but that they actually report all that is, is ridiculous.

Suppose that we had four senses instead of five, and could not hear. We would go about quite unconscious of our lack. The sounds of nature would fill the air as they do now; the wind would blow in the trees, the birds would sing in the branches, the April rain would pat-

ter on the roof, and all the animals would hear, but to us all this would not only be inaudible but unimaginable. We would not have the faintest notion of anything so beautiful and marvelous as sound. At the same time, the assertion that our four senses were telling us all there is would be just as reasonable and just as unreasonable as our like confidence in our senses five.

Or suppose that we had six senses. Suppose that besides being sensitive to the presence of material objects, and thus having acquaintance with orders of life akin to us and inferior to us, we were to be made sensitive also,—let us say,—to the presence of higher intelligences, of angels, and of persons having spiritual bodies. Suppose that of a sudden, we had such sight as the lad in the old story, the prophet's servant, who looked, and behold the mountainside was all ablaze with the shining soldiers of the Lord of Hosts. Is such a supposition in any way incredible or improbable?

"All knowledge," says a scholar, "is merely relative to certain faculties which we possess, and hence we very readily pass to the conclusion that enormous possibilities of knowledge and of life would lie open to us if those faculties were altered or enlarged. We pass our lives, as it were, in a single phase of existence,

whereas an infinite number of other phases of existence may lie around us, and even penetrate us, without our knowledge." Death "will only remove us into a new plane of being."

Take now the other difficulty, that the life to come lacks the demonstration of our reason. It does lack the demonstration of our reason: that is plain. We cannot prove it by mathematics, or by investigation, or even by philosophy. We cannot make it as indisputable as that five and five are ten. But it is a mistake to suppose that this fact of religion is different in this respect from other facts of common life. The truth is that in every plane of being, the future is incapable of proof. The future life is only a little further from the reach of demonstration than the future day. There is no proof of to-morrow. We believe that there will be a morrow, but we cannot by any argument of science establish it beyond the possibility of doubt. Day has indeed followed night for now these millenniums of centuries; but that immemorial sequence might stop short to-night at ten o'clock. All that we have to go on is rational probability. We find that to be quite enough for us in the usual transactions of life; and it may well suffice as to the life to come. The fact that it is in the future removes our own individual destiny beyond the scope

of demonstration, as the fact that the life into which others have already entered is invisible and intangible to us removes it beyond the testimony of the senses. But we expect the future life as we expect the future day on the basis of rational probability.

Let us now consider some of the grounds on which this rational probability rests.

The first argument for the life everlasting is that which is drawn from human consciousness.

We desire to live, and therein all men everywhere have agreed with us. The longing for eternal life is common to the race. So also is the firm belief that this longing will be satisfied. The expectation of immortality is so universal as to be accounted an elemental quality of man. It is as much a part of us spiritually as our eyes are physically. So strong is this desire, so deep is this belief, so undaunted is this expectation, that it amounts to a consciousness of immortality.

That means that the life everlasting is asserted by the inner voice. There is that within us which proclaims and maintains, in the face of all contradiction, that death is not the end. This consciousness is a spiritual fact, and is to be taken into account like a physical fact. For example, it is a physical fact that all material

substances tend to fall upon the earth; behind that is a law of nature, the law of gravitation. It is a spiritual fact that the soul of man reaches out in aspiration towards the life everlasting; behind that is a law of life, the law of immortality. When we trust the one, we are trusting "the normal indications of our bodily sense"; when we trust the other, we are trusting "the normal indications of our moral nature." And the one is as valid as the other.

A second argument for the life everlasting is found in the value of man.

I mean not only the human race, but the individual human being. In Hebrew thought, the idea of the life to come was a doctrine of the destiny of the nation. The Messiah, when He came, was to deliver Israel. He was to reign in a new Jerusalem over a redeemed people. Thus the future which is contemplated in the Hebrew scriptures is mainly a national future. In Greek thought, the doctrine of the other life was a prophecy of the future of the individual. Its characteristic expression was the sculptured tomb, showing the family in the joy of reunion in the land beyond the grave. The Christian doctrine takes the Hebrew truth and adds the Greek truth to it. It has regard not only to the innumerable multitude before the great white throne, but to every humblest

soul of which it is composed. The gospel is preëminently for the individual. Our Lord again and again asserted the care of God for every child in the whole human family.

The individual man, then, according to this teaching, is too precious,—much too precious, —to be allowed to die and live no more. It is morally incredible that an oak or an elephant or a stone barn shall outlast a man. As the process of creation is better understood, as we picture to ourselves more clearly that dramatic series of causes and effects which begins with the cosmic dust and comes on age after age through the innumerable centuries till it reaches its climax and conclusion in man, it becomes increasingly and at last imperatively necessary that man should survive death. He cannot die. The endless succession of the ages, pointing on and on to him, will not be satisfied with the shameful disappointment of these few brief days, and then death. It is impossible that the promise and preparation of all the past should end in—this. The logic of the universe demands the immortality of the soul.

What is the soul? It is ourself, on the spiritual side; as the body is ourself, on the physical side. The body is a combination of chemical elements, all of which continue. The body dies, and they are redistributed: not one of

them is lost. The physical forces persist. The soul is the centre of the spiritual forces of our being. These forces manifest themselves as will, affection, conscience, character. Shall these forces cease? Here are two series of forces, physical and spiritual. In the one series are oxygen, carbon and hydrogen; in the other series are will, affection and personality. "Is nature careful," asks a clear thinker, "careful to carry over the forces of the physical series, while she drops the forces of the spiritual series? Does she give to the lower part of man's nature the power of continuance while she denies it to the higher? Is chemical affinity a more precious thing in the universe than spiritual affection? Must atoms endure while spirits decay?" There is only one rational answer: and that is an assertion of the life to come as a necessary inference from the value of man.

A third argument for the life everlasting is that which is drawn from the justice of God.

If death is the end of life, it must be at the same time the end of all rational faith in a good God. If the best and the worst lie together in a common grave, and that is all, then it is plain that God does not care: not only does God not care for us with personal affection, but He does not care whether we do right

or wrong. So far as He is concerned, we may eat and drink, and do whatever earthly, sensual or devilish thing we please, for to-morrow we die, and it makes no difference. Thus the life future is bound up with the life present. The creed is at the heart of the commandments. The doctrine of the immortality of the soul is not a problem for the scholar, nor a consolation for the mourner only; it affects all morality. It affects morality because it determines our idea of God, whether or not God cares for goodness. It is not only we ourselves but, as we read in one of the psalms, God also who shall be judged at the last day.

If the man who suffers torture for the truth and is burned at the stake because he is loyal to the right dies like a beast, then the judge of all the earth does wrong. That is the inevitable assertion of our moral sense. We cannot help saying that: we know that it is true. At the same time, our moral sense says also that the judge of all the earth will not do wrong. God will not do wrong.

We must live. Not merely in the "continuance of the results of our actions"; not merely in the "persistence of force," or the "vitality of protoplasm"; not in "absorption into the divine," or in "eternal rest." What is needed for the establishment of divine justice, for the

vindication of the moral government of God, for the satisfaction of the moral sense of man, for the necessities of any clear ethical thinking, is nothing less than personal immortality.

These three arguments for the life everlasting, the first drawn from human consciousness, the second from the value of man, and the third from the justice of God, are independent of the word of Holy Scripture. They are grounded in reason. There are two other arguments which belong especially to the Christian religion, and to this day. One is based on Christ's resurrection, the other on Christ's revelation.

Christ is risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept. He was dead, and is alive forevermore. Because He lives, we shall live also. That has actually happened for which the troubled heart of man has longed from the beginning. For reasoning does not satisfy. This may be true, and that may be true, and the conclusion may be that after we die we shall live again: but the heart of man cries out for something more sure than that. Death is so terrible and convincing a fact that we must set against it not a series of arguments but another, contradictory fact. Death must somehow be confronted with life. Out of the awful and impenetrable and un-

broken silence of the grave must come a voice, a living voice. Out of death, somebody must come back to tell us what death is. That is what Christ did. That is what He did on that great day whose anniversary we keep with flowers and singing. He died and was buried, and the third day He rose again from the dead.

To the testimony of Christ's resurrection, we add the further testimony of His revelation. We know what He said. The arguments from reason may perplex rather than convince us; and even when they do convince us, we may still have an uneasy feeling that somebody else approaching the matter from another side might work out a different and less encouraging conclusion. The argument from the resurrection is beset with difficulties. But here is what Christ said. Here is what He said who is the supreme spiritual Master, the one abiding teacher of religion. No prophet, no philosopher, of any creed or of any age, approaches Him in His solitary position of authority. Nobody stands beside Him in the realm of spiritual truth. Nothing can be more certain than that He knows a hundred thousand times more than we do about spiritual matters. We attend with due respect to the masters of science when they teach us what

they know about the world of matter. Shall we not attend with like humility, and with incomparably deeper reverence, to the teachings of the supreme spiritual master concerning the world of spiritual truth? Can we behave more reasonably than that?

And here is what He said. God, He said, is our Father. The fatherhood of God and the life everlasting go together. God is no father, if having given us life and affection and aspiration and the sense of a divine sonship, He lets us die like weeds. "In My Father's house," He said, "are many mansions; if it were not so I would have told you." "Because I live, ye shall live also." "He that liveth and believeth in Me shall never die." Jesus Christ lived every day of His ministry in the unceasing realization of the life everlasting. Everything that He said and did supposes it.

Let us, then, lift up our hearts and thank God, and be glad. They who have gone before are in our Father's presence. We shall meet then again, where there shall be no more sorrow nor crying, nor any more death, but only Easter joy, in the land of life everlasting.

THE ADVANTAGE OF THE ASCENSION

It is expedient for you that I go away.—*John* 16 : 7.

It was best for the apostles, and for us also, that our Lord should go away. His ascension was for our advantage. That is what He said, and we know that it is true because He said it, but it is a hard saying.

It was best that He should go, for His own sake: we can understand that. It was a blessed change to leave our life behind Him, with its limitations, with its wearinesses and distresses, and to go into that other life which, as He Himself taught us, is inconceivably better than this. Between a worm crawling on a bough, and a butterfly sailing on the wings of the wind in the sun, what an immeasureable difference! It is a symbol of the change from earth to heaven, from the conditions of existence here to those other unimaginable conditions into which our Lord entered when the cloud received Him out of human sight. It was plainly best for Him that He should go; and He told the apostles that if they loved Him they would rejoice at it.

But how could it be best for them? They

depended so upon Him, waited so loyally and confidently for His word, listened with such deferential attention to His teaching. And He had more to teach them. The great lessons were only just begun. He had many things to say to them. How could it be best that that blessed voice should fall into silence, and that blessed face be hid behind the clouds?

They needed Him: and we also need Him. It is so hard to live the life of holiness. The visible, distracting, tempting world presses so upon us, so besets us without and within. It is so real and close, while the word of the spirit seems so vague and far away. It would all be very different, we feel, if He were here. We know how much our best friends help us; we know how much easier the best life seems when they are with us. If He were here, the supreme friend, the supreme Master of the soul, the visible presence of the invisible God, it would be so easy and natural for us to follow in His steps. It is true that we have the promise of His presence. He said that wherever any two or three of us should be assembled in His name, there He would be also. And we believe it. We know that He is here at this moment, as I speak, and as you listen. Jesus is here. But unhappily we cannot see Him. It is most un-

satisfactory. And when He tells us that it is expedient for us that He should go away, we wonder what He means. We envy the apostles who saw Him every day; who asked Him questions and were immediately answered; who walked with Him who is the Way, and learned of Him who is the Truth, and lived with Him who is the Life. How could it be in any way expedient either for them or for us that that blessed intercourse should cease?

It is so hard, too, to live the life of faith. The questions are so many, and the answers seem so often to be but echoes of the questions. Experience seems sometimes to be in such flat contradiction to revelation. The sky is so dumb when we pray; and deaf, also, we are tempted to think. Pain and wrong are so hard to reconcile with the power and love of God. Death is so convincing, and the black gate is so close shut against any light on the other side. If He were here He could make it all so plain to us. We could go to Him and He would tell us, and then we should know and be content. It is true that we have the Bible. We have the record which Matthew and Mark and Luke and John wrote. They said that Jesus said this word and that. But the words come to us at best at second hand. When we reflect how large a part of the mean-

ing of human speech is in the expression of the face and the tone of the voice, we see how much we lose. And then there are the critics and the commentators. And the critics discuss the authorship of these old histories, whether Matthew and Mark and Luke and John actually wrote them or not. And the commentators debate the meaning of the words, one maintaining that what they mean is this, and another asserting on the other hand that what they teach is that. And in the midst of these contradictory voices, what wonder if in some despair we repeat Pilate's question, What is truth? What wonder if we grow confused, and Jesus Christ seems far removed, and His words dim and uncertain. We look back to that ancient day, when Jesus spoke to men at first hand, when there were no critics and no commentators, and men could see with their own eyes, and hear with their own ears; and we feel that they had a better chance in Capernaum than we have here, to know the truth of God.

What did Jesus mean when He said, It is expedient for you that I go away?

He said, indeed, I go to prepare a place for you. He went away into the other world to make it ready for our coming. But we do not understand either the nature or the necessity

of all this preparation, nor why it should occupy these hundreds and hundreds of years. Heaven, one would think, is good enough as it is. We know very well that there is great need for the preparation of a place for the people of God here. There is abundant need that this present world be made more decently habitable. It is a great thing, no doubt, to have a place prepared for us in the life to come, but we are not in a position to appreciate it. We have a strong feeling that if our Lord were down here in our cities, He would be rendering us a tangible service. What is He doing up above, where the city is already the holy city?

Neither do we get much satisfaction from the other explanation which He gave of the advantage which would come to us from His ascension. If I go not away, He said, the Comforter will not come unto you, but if I depart I will send Him unto you. We are aware, of course, that the Comforter is the Holy Spirit. But for most of us, the conceptions which we have of the Holy Spirit are extremely vague. God the Father, we are able to think of; God the Son, we know and love; but God the Holy Ghost,—what ideas have we of God the Holy Ghost? We know more than the people of Ephesus who confessed to St. Paul that they

had not so much as heard of the Holy Ghost; but beyond that, what shall we say? This, at least, we know, that Jesus could be seen, and that the Holy Ghost cannot be seen; and that Jesus spoke in a voice which men could hear, while the voice of the Holy Ghost seems to be mingled almost indistinguishably with the voice of our own inclinations. God the Holy Ghost is God speaking in man's conscience, but what an indefinite thought that is! Jesus goes away, and the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, comes in His stead: and thereby the visible gives place to the invisible, the audible to the inaudible, and certainty becomes uncertainty. If Christ were Himself here to speak, we would know what He said, but we cannot be sure what the Holy Ghost says. And yet it is expedient that Christ should go away; how can that be?

The highest truth concerning the advantage of the ascension is in these two great sayings of our Lord: we may be sure of that. It was best for us that He should go in order that He might prepare a place for us, and in order that the Holy Spirit might come to us. But we do not understand. Some time we will know what these words mean, but as yet we know not. We need some lesser truths, closer to our common life, to assure us immediately that

our Lord's departure into the invisible world was indeed for our advantage.

One thing we know, and that is that in all instruction there is need from time to time of a change of teachers; sometimes because we have outgrown the teacher, having learned his lesson; sometimes because we have become so accustomed to his way of teaching that his lesson, though we may not have learned the whole of it, makes less impression upon us. It is according to human nature to undervalue what we have every day. Thus God is forever changing our instructors. He teaches us by the lips of men who have their day and bring their message, and for an hour take the great class of the nation or of the race, and then the bell rings, and the teacher's time is done. The poets, the philosophers, the saints, the preachers, the politicians and the soldiers take their turn at teaching us. And "God fulfils Himself in many ways, lest one good custom should corrupt the world."

It may be that Jesus felt that the apostles had been taught long enough in the lessons of His visible presence, and that it would be expedient to teach them now by the different lessons of His invisible presence. There is no danger that we will ever grow weary of Christ, nor is it likely that we will ever learn the

whole of the truth of Christ. But Christ, knowing our need of change, changes His way of teaching. It is true that He said that He was going away, but He said also that He was coming back again. "A little while," He promised the apostles, "and ye shall see Me, because I go to the Father." They could not at the moment understand it, but they came by and by to perceive that it was His assurance of continual and unending presence with them. He went away that He might return in another form, and thenceforth be closer to them than ever. The Comforter then, whom we call the Holy Ghost, is in this sense the abiding Christ; the spirit is the spirit of Jesus. The ascension was the beginning of a new and better way of spiritual teaching. We can see that in this respect it was expedient for us that He should go away.

Another thing that we know is this, that there is a difference between sight and faith. Faith is better than sight. "Because thou hast seen Me, thou hast believed," said Christ to Thomas, "blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed." Faith is better than sight because it is the action of higher faculties of our nature. It differs from sight as the writing of poetry differs from the sawing of wood. Anybody who has any strength can

saw wood, and anybody who has eyes can see. But in the making of a poem a brain and a heart are needed, and more also; and they are similarly needed for the right recitation of a creed. Sight is the perception of the outside of the visible part of an event. Jesus heals the sick, and all who stand about Him see the miracle; but they who have faith see Jesus, and have no need of a miracle to point Him out, to tell them that He is wise and wonderful and divine. Need Beethoven work a miracle in order to convince the lover of music of the greatness of the Ninth Symphony? Faith is recognition, without the need of the argument of sight. To-day, although the Lord be out of sight, the believer recognizes Him, and gives Him the quick allegiance of his service and his love.

Sight is a recognition of the face; faith is a recognition of the heart. The highest perception is that which perceives personality, the actual self, the heart. And that depends on spiritual faculties. To know a good man when we meet him is an achievement which cannot be accomplished unless we have some spiritual kinship with him. Faith, accordingly, depends on character, and therein is immeasurably superior to sight which depends on nothing but good eyes. Thus Jesus went away out of the

sight of His disciples that we might thus be able to exercise these higher faculties, and thereby to cultivate that which is finest and noblest in us. We can see that in this way it was expedient for us that He should go away.

To these advantages of Christ's ascension—the change from a visible to an invisible teacher, and the change from sight to faith,—two others may be added which make the meaning of His words still plainer. One is in the fact that the ascension made our Lord's universal presence possible; or, at least, made it easier for us to realize it. The other is in the fact that the ascension made infallibility impossible in the Christian religion; made it impossible, that is, for us to depend so much on Him as to hinder our own growth.

So long as Jesus walked in visible form in Judea or in Galilee the Christian religion was inevitably localized. It was centred where He stood. It is true that He set Himself against such localization. He told the Samaritan woman that neither in Samaria nor in Judea was the nearest place of approach to God, but that God is a spirit, and whoever anywhere addresses Him in spirit and in truth addresses God immediately present. And He said that wherever any two or three were met in His name no matter where, there would He be.

He taught the universality of the divine presence, of the divine attention to prayer, of the divine love. But while He lived our life, it was impossible for the disciples to realize that. Wherever He was, God was. When they were in His visible presence they felt themselves nearer to Him than when they were away. They could not help it. Accordingly, during the days after His resurrection, He instructed them in this new kind of presence. He taught them to be expectant of Him everywhere and always. As they walked along the road, or climbed the hill, or sat in the upper room, or cast their nets into the lake, they knew not at what moment He might appear among them. They began to feel His constant presence. And then He ascended into heaven, leaving a blessing and a promise which they were at last prepared to receive: "Lo, I am with you alway."

After that, they went about upon His errands, and the Lord was with them. He was at the same time with Peter at Joppa and with James at Jerusalem; He was with Barnabas at Antioch and with Paul at Rome. Wherever they journeyed in His service, no matter into what remote, wild, or heathen lands, He accompanied them. Jesus Christ is with us here to-day. It would be hard to believe that, if

He were still visibly resident in Capernaum. He would seem to belong ever so much more to the disciples in Syria than to us. Thus the spiritual presence of the Master brings a consciousness of personal aid and blessing which His bodily presence could not bring. The ascension into heaven made universality possible in the Christian religion. He went away from the little company on the ascension hill that He might come back again to all of us, and abide forever.

It was a good thing to have universality thus made possible; it was also a good thing to have infallibility made impossible.

Absolute infallibility is always, in the nature of things, impossible. For an infallible teacher is not infallible unless he has learners who will make no mistakes. An infallible book is not infallible unless it has infallible readers. For infallibility means the entire absence of error. And while human nature continues as it is, we may talk about it, but we can never have it; never. It is a sufficient definition of infallibility, however, to say that it is that characteristic of a statement which compels acceptance. When the infallible voice speaks we listen and believe.

But Jesus never compelled acceptance. He was the only infallible teacher that ever lived;

when He spoke, He spoke the truth. Yet it is plain that He habitually and purposely refrained from laying obligations on men's thinking. He came not to make us slaves, but to set us intellectually and spiritually free. What He said set no barrier across the path of thought: on the contrary His words inspired and stimulated thinking. His utterance was not the end but the beginning of the truth. It is significant that He compared His teaching to the planting of the seed. Jesus did not compel men to believe. Instead of that, He always left a possibility for men to doubt, if they would: so that faith might be the genuine expression of the man. "How long," they asked Him, "dost Thou hold us in suspense? If Thou be the Christ tell us plainly." But so far removed from plainness was His answer, that after all His public teaching, when He was accused before the high priest of blasphemy, no two witnesses agreed together.

It was inevitable, however, that the disciples should be dependent on their Master. While He was visibly present among them, He was such a supreme and ultimate authority that, almost of necessity, they let Him do their thinking for them. And He knew that that was not good for them. While He remained dominant among them, they were but children.

He went away in order that they might grow, in order that they might use their own minds and live their own lives. And it is plain that the difference between the Peter and John of the gospels and the Peter and John of the Acts is the difference between children and grown men. That is what the ascension effected.

It was expedient for us that Christ should go away:—To prepare a place for us; to send the Holy Spirit to us; to give us a new teacher; to appeal to faith rather than to sight; to help us to realize His universal presence; to develop spiritual manhood in us. His ascension was for our advantage.

THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH

When He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth.—*John* 16 : 13.

THE first Christian fact about God is that He is the Father. The content of that fact has undergone some social change, because the common relation between a father and his children has changed. Fathers and children are better acquainted than they used to be. There is much less formality in their domestic intercourse. The distance between them has diminished, even in the course of a single generation. The ordinary conversation of our children with their parents would have amazed and shocked our grandfathers. While there is some loss in this familiarity, the gain, I believe, is greater. Respect, of a conventional sort may be less, but confidence and affection grow with natural intimacy; provided, of course, that we are deserving of them. I think that the profession of fatherhood and motherhood is more difficult under these modern conditions, for it is easier to look good on a pedestal than to be good on the common ground. Nevertheless, in the midst of all changes, the

heart of the meaning of the symbolic name continues. When we say that God is our Father, we mean that God is good, and intends our good. And that is a Christian fact about God, for no other religion—except that of the Jews, who are our spiritual kindred,—teaches that truth. That is why we send missionaries to people of other religions; because we know that they are ignorant of this supreme interpretive, consolatory and inspiring truth about God.

The first Christian fact about God is that He is our Father: that is, God is good and desires our good. The second Christian fact is that God is our Saviour. That signifies that the good God wishes us His children to be good; that the most important thing in life is character; that the essential purpose of religion as we understand it, is to establish in this world a kingdom of divine righteousness; and that God cares so much for this that He gave His only begotten Son,—yes, in a mystery, He gave Himself,—that we should not perish but should have life eternal. When the gospel speaks of death and of life the meaning concerns not the future only, but the present. To perish is to be dead in trespasses and sins; to live is to walk with God in newness of life. To this end, to save us out of this immediate

death and to bring us into this life, the heart of which is the knowledge and obedience of God, God revealed Himself to us in Jesus Christ; who took our nature upon Him, lived in the midst of our temptations to show us how to meet them, and died upon the cross to manifest the greatness of the divine hatred of sin and of the divine love for us sinners. It means that God cares. Not only does He desire our good, but He takes definite measures to secure it. God is our Saviour.

To these two Christian facts about God, that He is our Father and our Saviour, Jesus in this text adds a third. God is the Spirit of Truth. For however we may distinguish in the careful phrases of accurate theology, between Father, Son and Holy Ghost, we are thinking all the time of one only God. It is the one God who is our Father and our Saviour, and of whom the words were spoken, "When He, the spirit of truth is come, He will guide you into all truth." Our Lord is here describing a third attribute of God.

It is God who guides the intelligence of the race. It is He who lives in all life and thinks in all thought. Progress is the consequence of His continual urging of mankind, onward and upward. The doctrine of evolution is but a statement in the terms of science of the Pente-

costal truth, which is set forth in this text, expressed in prose and poetry, in prayer and prophecy, in both testaments, and has been precious to the hearts of true believers during all the centuries of true religion. The world is growing better; man is ever learning new knowledge of the mysterious universe about him and of the laws of his own life, and is thus making daily discoveries and solving old hard problems and gradually becoming civilized and Christianized. We are semi-savage still: the fact that we have as yet found no better way to settle international differences than the old way of fists and clubs, shows that. We are but partially converted to Christianity. The first page of every morning paper is the chronicle of the deeds of a pagan people. But we are coming on. We have already reached the point at which we are ashamed of conditions which formerly seemed to belong to the order of nature. That means much. Slowly we are emerging out of the old dark jungles into the sunlit plains and heights. And the impelling force which is behind all this is God, the Spirit of Truth.

Every year, in the spring and in the fall God calls the birds, now north, now south. And when they obey, taking the wings of the wind, they write in air on the blue page of the sky, the formula of the movements of men and

nations. We, too, take our course in history, from generation to generation, now in this position, and now in that, but ever towards the destination of our highest good, stirred by the pentecostal winds, obeying the silent summons of God. Jesus promised that God would guide us into all truth; and God is doing that, every day we live.

God is back of all the discussions. He it is who prompts the questions. We think, because God sets us thinking. God speaks by the lips of men who stand in pulpits; He speaks also by the lips of other men, whose only knowledge of what a pulpit looks like is derived from pictures. God is heard in the utterances of the orthodox, but not in them alone. Sometimes the heretics have the larger share of the truth of God. Sometimes heresy is only truth in minority. It is accounted heresy because the great body of men have not yet learned it. Presently, it makes its way, and is accredited as orthodox. Often, we fall into what is called the "fallacy of this or that"; which means the mistake of thinking that one or the other of two conflicting positions must be false, while in fact they may both be needed, with all their differences, to make out the complete round of the truth. But in any case, mistaken or not, orthodox or not, suc-

cessful or not, the search after spiritual verities is inspired of God. By stress of opposition, by test of criticism, by every discipline which will make us think, the Spirit of Truth is guiding us into all truth.

There is no conception of God which meets more adequately the sincerest longings of our time than this which is brought to our attention this day by this text, that God is the Spirit of Truth, the guide and helper of men towards truth. Sin and need are with us, now as always, crying out in the prayer that never ends for God the Father and God the Saviour, but our time cries urgently for truth, and is devoted to the attainment and possession of the truth. And we touch the heart of living questions which living men are asking, when we teach that God above us loves truth more than we do, and desires us to know the truth even more than we desire to know it. It is in His name and by His will that we pray, "Grant us in this world knowledge of Thy truth."

This I say, endeavoring to speak the thought of your own hearts. The promise that the Spirit of Truth shall guide us into all truth makes its supreme appeal to educated persons. The Spirit of Truth is the God of the scholar. Listen with all possible attention to His voice. Resolutely refuse to be distracted by the con-

fusion of contradictory voices, no matter by what authority they speak. For such persons, there is but one supreme and imperative question, which may not be evaded nor postponed, nor made subordinate: Is it true? Yes, the formulas say this, and the ancients say that, and thus and so have good people believed from the foundation of the world; but that is no adequate answer. Is it true? Is it true? For nothing is orthodox, nothing is Christian, nothing is religious, which is not true. Neither the Bible nor the Church are on the side of any falsehood, unless their essential intention is misinterpreted. The Bible was written, the Church was founded, by honest men, by men of God, by men liable indeed to error, but with all their souls intent on truth. If error exists either in the divine book or in the divine society, as error must exist in all things which have a human side, we are most fully in their sincere spirit when we frankly recognize it.

I would have the conservative majority defend all old positions resolutely. I am glad that majorities are commonly conservative. I am not ready to admit that youth is naturally wiser than age. I incline rather to the opinion of the philosopher who said, "We are not infallible, not even the youngest of us." But I

recognize the fact that authority is only a convenient temporary expedient in the service of truth. Authority is the officer of the anteroom, who deals with routine matters, and answers ordinary questions. When a serious person comes, seeking an interview with truth, it is the business of authority to act as usher. The serious person, coming on his vital errand, cannot parley with the usher. Straight he must go into the majestic presence of the truth. When authority, confronted by this demand, stands with head high and arms folded before the door which bears truth's name, and denies entrance, the inference is that truth is not within. I mean that we may not reply to serious questions with the assertions of the past. The only fair reply is that which appeals to reason. It is only in tender years that age may say to youth, "This you must believe because I tell you." I would have youth follow its own instinct, and entertain its own doubts. I would have the scholar take up the quest of truth, as the knights went out to seek the Holy Grail, as a sacred adventure. And I would have the scholar feel that such inquiry, even though it assail the very foundations of the faith, is an act of devotion in the name of God, the Spirit of Truth. If the conclusion to which the scholar comes is true, then God

approves and blesses it, though it be banned by creeds and councils.

But in order to the attainment of a true conclusion much more is needed than honesty and fearlessness of purpose, more is needed than ability of mind and abundance of knowledge. The promise that the Spirit of Truth shall guide us into truth implies two conditions which are essential to right religious thinking. The Spirit of Truth addresses our spirit; we must have an attentive and receptive and appreciative spirit, and that implies an upright life. The Spirit of Truth guides our steps; we follow with humility and reverence. Righteousness and reverence, then, are necessary preliminaries to the possession of the truth. One condition is that a right relation be maintained between truth and goodness; the other condition is that a right relation be maintained between truth and guidance. I purpose to occupy the remainder of this sermon with a consideration of these two conditions.

Christ said that knowledge of divine truth depends on character. The doctrine of God is to be discovered, He said, by following the will of God. Character determines the quality of thought. That is what Milton meant when he said that he who would write a noble poem must first live a noble poem. Poetry is not to

be composed by rule. The high secret is not attained by acquiring knowledge about iambics or dactylics. Poetry comes out of the heart, and has its source in character. Also in science, discoveries are made by those who have the patience, the devotion, the self-sacrifice, the enthusiasm, in a word, the character of the true discoverer. They must live aright in order to think aright. So it is in religion. Spiritual things are spiritually discerned. It is to the pure in heart, as our Lord said, that the beatific vision is revealed, and they see God.

This is the meaning of the answer of our Lord to the question of the disciples: How is it that Thou wilt manifest Thyself to us, and not unto the world? He said, "If a man love Me, he will keep My words, and My Father will love him and we will come and make our abode with him." It is an assertion of an ethical prerequisite for faith. First, the love of Christ, who is the revelation and the ideal of all goodness; then the obedience of Christ, the diligent keeping of His holy word; and then, as consequence and reward, the light of God seen in the face of Christ, truth perceived where others, unprepared, see nothing.

It is plain that there is such a fact in human nature as simple incapacity for judgment. He

only can give right judgment who is in intellectual and spiritual sympathy with the ideals according to which judgment must be rendered. And in order to possess such sympathy, one must live a life in which all that is fine and high and beautiful is emphasized and developed. Bring in a tramp out of the street, and make him listen to a fugue of Bach and ask him what he thinks. What does it matter what he thinks? His opinion has no value. It is an extreme instance, but it illustrates the essential need of proper preparation in order to validity of judgment. It writes in large, plain letters the fact that character enters into all spiritual decisions.

In the case, then, of one who feels a lack of devout appreciation, or who finds it difficult to accept the teachings of religion, it is possible that the cause is some interior, moral defect. It may be that what we hold to be the truth of God is not really true, but it is certain that only the saints will ever find it out. If anybody who is living idly or carelessly or lightly thinks that he has found error in the creed, he is like a man with disordered sight who sees black dust floating over the blue sky; the dust is in his eyes: the errors are in his own imperfect vision.

There is a close connection, then, between

truth and goodness. There is a like relation between truth and guidance.

The promise that the Spirit of Truth shall guide us into truth implies on our part a willingness to be guided, and that means humility and patience. Whoever is living a right life, and has a clear mind and a heart open to heaven, and yet accounts untrue that which we hold to be both true and precious, brings us into this dilemma: either what we regard as true is not true, as he says; or what we regard as true we have not succeeded in teaching clearly, so that he refuses not the truth but our blundering statement of it: or else there is something the matter with his method of inquiring.

Some who reject what they think to be the Christian religion have not waited to find out what the Christian religion is. People who have accounted themselves heretics are sometimes surprised to find that their opinions are not at serious variance with the minds of reasonable Christians. They have been quietly imagining that they were the only intelligent persons in the neighborhood, the only true lovers of right reason, and they are amazed to find that the Christian Church is quite as intelligent as they are, and is growing year by year, attending to the guiding counsels of the Holy Spirit, into better realization of the truth.

For revelation is of necessity progressive; since man can learn only so much as he is capable of learning. Imperfect ideas of God are therefore inevitable and of the nature of things, all along. There can be no progress without imperfection. But all the time, the great, progressive, living and learning Church of Christ is leaving imperfection behind. Men of science once believed that the earth is the centre of the universe, but we do not hold that against them now they have changed their minds. Theologians have also taught various propositions similarly mistaken, and have discovered and abandoned their mistakes.

To these objectors who do not realize that God is guiding the church, on and on, out of error into truth, are to be added others who are not willing to submit their own minds to the conditions of such guidance. He who is being guided must be patient: he must not be in a hurry. Objections cannot often be answered as readily as they can be stated. You may deny in one minute that the earth revolves about the sun. You may say, "Look, use your eyes; employ your common sense. Isn't that the sun? Was it not here an hour ago? Is it not there now? Can you not see it move?" That denial cannot be adequately answered in one minute nor in two minutes;

nor can the wisest man make the truth perfectly plain to the mind of ignorance. The more difficult the subject, the nearer its approach to the regions of mystery, the harder it is to explain it to the satisfaction of the questioner who is in a hurry. The question may be absurd, the objection may be ridiculous, the truth may be as clear to your own soul as that five and five make ten, but the explanation gets no hearing at the ears of haste.

The Holy Spirit will guide us into all truth, if we have the patience to be guided. But guidance means a slow process of meditation and of experience. It means a confidence in our destination, though for the moment we do not know where we are. They only are lost who in the dark and difficult places let go the guiding hand, and wander off in paths of their own choosing.

The Spirit of Truth guides us into all truth. By piety and by patience, we shall learn His lesson. Little by little, if we love God and do His will, God will give us the Pentecostal blessing,—the blessing of light, the blessing of peace, the blessing of the possession of the truth.

THE IDEA OF GOD

In Him we live and move and have our being.—*Acts* 17 : 28.

This is an expression of the idea of God. It deals with the greatest of all subjects; and because it deals with it in a great way it belongs among the shining sentences, among the golden words of the world.

The most interesting and significant fact in religion at this moment is a new perception of the truth and of the meaning of this idea. It is entering into the modern mind as the doctrine of Copernicus entered in the sixteenth century, and the doctrine of Darwin in the nineteenth, pervasive, revolutionary, a new light, changing our ways of thinking. Thus these words are not only the formula of a conception of God, but a symbol of the fact of progress in the domain of theology. I purpose, accordingly, to consider them in these two aspects: speaking first of the providential ordering whereby theologians change their minds, and then of the notable change which is now taking place in the idea of God.

In the book of Revelation there is a vision

Celebrated German Astronomer
15 Cent. Also a R Priest.

of God walking in the midst of the golden candlesticks. The candlesticks are symbols of the churches. The lights which they hold aloft, some smoking and some shining, represent the teaching of the churches. And the God of Truth, the instructor and inspirer of the teaching churches, is in the form of an old man with a young face. "His head and his hair were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire." That is, he looked at the first sight like an old man, oldest of men, ancient of days, the primeval patriarch of all time, crowned with the white crown of age; but when one looked again, behold, he was a youth, in the first flush of his young manhood, the son of the morning, facing the glowing future, filled with the fire of enthusiasm. What does it mean? It means that the God of Truth is at the same time old and young: old as the universe, yet young as the newest discovery about it; the God of our grandfather Abraham who is trying to say the creed just as he said it fifty years ago, and also the God of Joseph and Benjamin, undergraduates, who recite the old words with new meanings.

That is, God blesses the changes of men's minds. Christ came that He might change men's minds: and He did it mightily. The

streets of Nazareth extend across the continents, and we are all fellow townsmen of Him of whom it is said in bold words that He increased in wisdom. This wisdom whose increase is thus blessed of God concerns not only science but religion. Year by year man has entered nearer and nearer into the knowledge of God.

Both the Bible and Christian history record a progressive revelation of God. Between the God of Adam, walking amidst the trees of the garden in the cool of the day, and the God of St. John, walking in mysterious majesty amidst the golden candlesticks, what an immeasurable difference! Adam hears the sound of God's feet, rustling in the fallen leaves, along the orchard path,—the landlord come to call upon his tenant. John beholds the Almighty and Eternal, in the form, indeed, of a man, for the sake of our weak eyes, but unimaginably transcending all humanity; and before Him a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations and kindreds and people and tongues, falling down in adoration, saying, "Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be unto our God forever and ever."

This difference in the idea of God between the first book of the Bible and the last is rep-

resentative of a continual progress, in which we ourselves are taking part. Generation by generation, we are increasing in the knowledge of God. The old words remain at the beginning of the creed—"I believe in God"—but we say them with a new interpretation. The vision of religious truth is that of the old man with the young face. Truth is perpetually young. The eager eyes of the disciple of truth blaze like a flame. Out he goes in expectation of discovery. It is his mission to find truth in the range of religion as it is the mission of the man of science to find truth in the phenomena of physics. And he knows, and rejoices in the knowledge that all the truth has not yet been found.

The world was dull enough for the student of religion in the days when the formula "It is written" was supposed to be a sufficient answer to all questions. His business then was to only commit old books to memory. To-day, all that is changed. The student of theology goes now to the Church and to the Bible as freely as the student of geology goes to the hills: in his working clothes, singing on his way. He used to have a nervous fear of the Church and of the Bible; he used to be afraid of doing something that might hurt them. He had an idea that they were of a very delicate

and fragile constitution, and that unless they were handled with devout precaution they would break into a thousand pieces. He is no longer hindered by these fears. He is no more afraid of injuring the Church or the Bible than the geologist is afraid of injuring the Rocky Mountains. He has found that they are of an enduring substance.

Indeed, so great is the change which has taken place in the disposition and method of students of religion that it may fairly be compared to that which was experienced by the people of Israel when they came out of Egypt. The resemblances are so curiously close that one is tempted to enlarge upon them. For example, whatever hinders the student from the free exercise of his mind,—such as a fear of the consequences of honest thinking,—is a species of bondage. It constitutes an intellectual Egypt. Also, our deliverance is so recent, that the Egyptians,—if I may so speak,—are still in pursuit. Their number decreases a good deal as the distance widens, but their voices of remonstrance, of menace or of entreaty, are still audible. Moreover, a good many of the Israelites are by no means grateful for their extrication out of bondage; they regret the old peace of mind which they had when they were under strict obedience, and are unhappy under

the inevitable hardships of their new condition. For freedom has its disadvantages. The desert of the wandering is not so pleasant a country as the land of Egypt. They call our attention to the fact that it is a desert, and that we are apparently engaged only in wandering, without getting anywhere. They are sorry that they left Egypt. They find themselves suffering from hunger, and much exposed to the attacks of Amalekites. Nevertheless, the new Exodus, like the old, shall be followed, we believe, by a new conquest of the kingdom of the truth, and by the establishment of a new nation in the land of promise.

I have spoken thus far of the fact of change in general as a part of the providential ordering of God. Our Lord promised that the Holy Spirit should guide us into all truth: and that means a gradual progress out of ignorance. It means a long road to the City of Celestial Truth, and pilgrims journeying upon it: in the far distance, the patriarchs: then the prophets, then the apostles, schoolmen, reformers, critics, —groups of eager travelers watching the horizon for the gleam of the spires of the New Jerusalem, the Holy Spirit guiding them all.

Thus I come to the new thought of God, which is contained in this old text as all the marvels of an age of machinery were con-

tained in the steam which stirred the lid of the kettle over the domestic fire: New and yet old also, dimly seen afar by men of God in the Old Testament and by men of God in other lands and creeds, by philosophers and poets, and announced by St. Paul preaching at Athens, and never wholly lost to sight through all the Christian centuries, the idea of God which is expressed in the words "In Him we live and move and have our being."

St. Paul did not announce that as a new discovery. He followed the sentence with a confirming quotation from a Greek author. He felt that the Greeks would understand him: and the Christian Greeks did understand him. The men of the New Testament and the fathers who immediately followed them were filled with the thought of the universal presence of God. God was in all life. God spoke in all good men. He inspired the Hebrew prophets, He inspired also, though with a different result, the saints and sages of other religions. The men who thought of God in this large way held out hands of fraternal hospitality to Socrates and Plato. They perceived that all truth, wherever spoken and fulfilled, is a revelation of God.

But the idea of God depends upon the idea of man. We infer the divine attributes from

the human virtues. God is man at his best, magnified by infinity. This natural inference was applied to the conception of the sovereignty of God. God is the great King: He is therefore, men said, like the greatest human king. This was an idea which needed some modification at a time when the greatest human king was Cæsar. They had to subtract a good many of the characteristics which, while they seemed to be universal among kings, were manifestly out of place in heaven. But the king's power and glory, the king's majesty, his palace and his throne, seemed to belong with propriety to the idea of God.

God, then, was in His celestial palace, on a great white throne, beyond the circle of the sky. God, like Cæsar, was remote from the common people. Sometimes He made a "progress," marching in state, so that even the humblest man might catch a dim glimpse of Him. This He did in Egypt, scattering ten plagues on either side of Him, scaring the people and compelling Pharaoh to His will. And so, in ways of splendor and terror, amidst hailstones and coals of fire, at other times and in other nations. But for the most part He resided aloof in heaven, immediately accessible only to His courtiers, that is to His angels and His saints. Once His Son came down here, and for a few

years lived our life; but He returned to the palace in the heights, and must Himself be approached thereafter only by saints and angels. Communication was to be had with the King of heaven, as with the Emperor of Rome, by a long diplomatic process. The petitioner must go to the priest, the priest to an angel or a saint, the angel or saint to the prince, finally the prince to the king. As for the earth, that had been set sufficiently a-going a great while back; it was governed by law, though largely under the usurped dominion of the devil: and God took part in its affairs mainly by miracle. For our instruction, He had provided the Bible; for our assistance and salvation, He had instituted the sacraments.

This, in a general and hasty statement, was the idea of God which men had derived, logically enough, from the Latin form of government. It was modified many times by poets who saw the glory of God in the stars, and by mystics who sought to meet God face to face. Especially, the conception of the church as the provincial court of heaven, and of the offices of priests and saints, was much changed for many people at the Reformation. But the Latin idea of God continued. Indeed, so long did it prevail that it was still dominant in theology a few years ago. Most of us were

taught it in our childhood. Our impressions of the Bible, of the person of our Lord, of heaven and hell, of the direction of our prayers, were greatly shaped by it. God sat remote from earth, throned in awful majesty.

Meanwhile, two new forces, one in politics, the other in science, were gradually but mightily entering into the general mind, and bringing with them a new idea of God.

First, in politics, the old kind of king began to pass away. Indeed he was attacked, centuries before, when the Goths besieged Rome; for the King of the Goths pitched his tent among the people. The contention which was then begun concerned the nature and the residence of power. Is the King separate from the people, their absolute ruler; or is he among the people, identified with them, their representative? Does he govern for his own interest, or for the general interest? Do the people belong to him, or does he belong to them? Gradually, as that ancient contention began to be decided, the old absolute monarchy ceased to exist. We are this day witnessing the end of it in Russia. Every other civilized country of Europe has a constitutional government. The Czar is the last precarious survivor of the Latin kings.

Meanwhile, in science, the teachers of evolu-

tion were knocking at the gates of all the walled cities of the mind, as the Goths had pounded at the gates of Rome. It is a significant fact that Darwin and Garabaldi were contemporaries, and that the first Italian Parliament declared Victor Emmanuel constitutional King of Italy two years after the publication of the "Origin of Species." That was forty years ago. In science, as in politics, the contention between the old learning and the new was as to the residence of power. Is the power which keeps the world alive outside of it, initially a First Great Cause, and after that an occasional interference with the order of nature? Or is the force of the world within, a power resident and pervasive? Is the true symbol of the universe a house, for which the carpenter assembles his materials and nails them together? or is it a tree which grows by mysterious, continuing processes, out of a seed? Again, in the realm of nature, as in the realm of nations, the idea of a resident force, constant and omnipresent prevailed. And it was presently perceived that this was a definition of the sovereignty of God.

The effect of these two influences has been to change the idea of God. We go back to the thought of the Greeks, and to the sermon which St. Paul preached to them at Athens.

It is God in whom we live, and move and have our being.

The old idea had a deep heart of truth, and that abides. God is still seen to be apart from the world which He has made: He is not so interfused with the visible universe that the world is God. The world is the garment of God, the manifestation of God. God is the life of the world, the soul of the world. Moreover, God is a person. Though He pervades the world, like the air we breathe, still is He a person; because we are. God is inferred not only from the physical universe, but from us, personal beings, creations of His, in His image and likeness. It is impossible that we should be higher than God. He thinks and plans and lives and loves as we do,—only with such a difference as there is between a drop of water and an ocean.

But God is at the same time in all our life. That is what St. Paul said, wherein the philosophers are now in agreement with him. God is in nature; all the natural processes are divine processes. The common order is God's usual way. Law is our understanding and definition of His will. The effect of this idea is to remove the old distinction between the natural and the supernatural.

"The undivineness of the natural and the

unnaturalness of the divine," says a recent writer, "is the great heresy of popular thought respecting religion." That is what I mean. To the men and women of a past generation, the world was sharply divided into the natural and the supernatural. Everything which was capable of explanation in the terms of law and of experience was natural. All that was mysterious and unexplainable was supernatural. And the supernatural was the act of God. God was very dimly seen in the daily commonplaces of human life: He was plainly seen in the miraculous. The fable of the Persian prince illustrates the point of view. In his presence the magician planted an acorn, and while the prince looked into a pool of water, the acorn grew into an oak. Behold! said the magician. And there was the tall tree, at the sight of which the prince bowed down and adored God, who had thus made known His mighty power. But when the magician told him that he had looked into the pool of water eighty years, during which the oak had grown according to the ordinary growth of oaks, the prince was much displeased. He felt that he had been led to say his prayers under false pretenses.

The effect of this idea of God's relation to the world was to exaggerate enormously the

importance of the unexplainable, for only by interference with nature did God reveal Himself. Nature stood between the soul of man and God, and every new territory added to the domain of nature increased the distance. Thus religion, under this misconception, logically and of necessity resisted the advance of reason and became the enemy of science. Men who explained the inspiration of the writers of the Bible in terms of other human experience, did so at their risk. And they who questioned the miraculous in any detail, and tried to bring it into relation with the general laws of mind and body, were accounted irreligious. They were robbing God. They were denying the existence of God. Of course they were: under a theory which maintained that God had little or nothing to do with the world of nature.

We are not to-day of that opinion. We perceive that the universe is all one world of God, at the same time natural and supernatural. Whatever is taken over from the regions of the mysterious and established in the plain order of nature does but add to His glory of whose holy will nature is an expression. We begin to see what our Lord meant when the man asked for a miracle to convert his brothers, and was told that there

is a sufficient revelation of God in the ordinary service of the church. Somebody says that God evidently prefers the common people because He has made so many of them. It is also plain that He prefers to make Himself known to us in the course of common life, because He uses that method most of the time. There He is revealed, the God of law, the God of love, constant in blessing. Nature is a manifestation of Him whose glory is declared in the splendor of the firmament. The work of man, whether he builds a city, or founds a church, or writes a book, or tills the ground, is done in coöperation with Him who worketh in us both to will and to do. Every day we go about our ordinary business in the divine presence. The occupation of the student, in his endeavor to bring all mystery into the light of the eternal laws, has not only the sanction of Him who said, "Prove all things: hold fast that which is good," but is done in obedience to an instinct which is a voice of God.

We are set at liberty: that is the sum of it. The new perception of the being of God is the enfranchisement of religious scholarship. It is the end of fear, and the beginning of new faith. It sanctions all investigation, and blesses all exercise of reason. It sends the

theologian, as it sends the scientist, to the honest facts, natural and divine, and bids him tell us plainly what he learns of God. We stand as one who looks out from the summit of a great hill, and stretches wide his arms and breathes the breath of the strong wind, giving thanks and praise to Him in whom we live and move and have our being.